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**MICHAEL COLLINS
AND THE MAKING
OF A NEW IRELAND**

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OF A NEW IRELAND**



MICHAEL COLLINS

From the painting by Sir John Lavery, R.A. By permission of
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MICHAEL COLLINS AND THE MAKING OF A NEW IRELAND

By
PIARAS BEASLAÍ

Volume I



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PREFACE TO POPULAR EDITION

IN presenting to the public a popular edition of *Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland*, I desire to express my gratitude for the favourable reception accorded to my work. I received letters of appreciation from readers all over the world, including a number of sympathetic Englishmen. I have also to thank my critics both for the kind things they had to say, and the shortcomings which they pointed out, of which nobody is more conscious than myself.

I feel bound to acknowledge the general broad-mindedness with which English reviewers approached a work which must have contained much that was distasteful to them. I have read over 150 reviews of my book, some bitterly hostile, but I only met with three which I regarded as unfair and malicious; and, strange to say, these were all written by Irishmen—and not by opponents of the Treaty. Many who differed strongly from me on the Treaty issue were kind enough to congratulate me on the fairness of my presentations of the facts.

A few slips and omissions which have been pointed out to me are dealt with in the additional "Corrigenda."

It is an interesting fact that a book has just appeared from Brigadier-General Crozier, the organiser

PREFACE

and first Chief of the Auxiliaries, in which most of my charges against the Black and Tans and the British administration in Ireland in 1920-21 are corroborated in detail.

PIARAS BÉASLAÍ.

ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

Vol. I., page 1, line 7.—For “town” read “towns.”

Vol. I., page 28.—Delete line 17.

Vol. I., page 59.—Mr. Joseph Stanley, of the Gaelic Press, also printed our publications at this time, and was put out of business by the military authorities.

Vol. I., page 80.—For “Fourth Dublin Brigade,” read “Fourth Battalion of the Dublin Brigade.”

Vol. I., page 93.—The name of the Hibernian Rifles, who also took an honourable part in the Insurrection, was omitted from the original proclamation, but was inserted in a reprinted proclamation on Easter Tuesday.

Vol. I., page 104.—For “P. Colivet,” read “M. P. Colivet.”

Vol. I., page 267.—For “trust” read “thrust.”

Vol. I., page 310.—The captors of Araglen Barracks belonged to Cork No. 2 Brigade, and were headed by Michael Fitzgerald.

Vol. I., page 332, line 3.—For “son of James Lawless, Secretary of the Dublin County Council,” read “son of the late Frank Lawless, T.D., one of the Easter Week leaders.”

Vol. I., page 338.—The Volunteers in the fray at Fermoy were led by the late Liam Lynch.

Vol. I., page 376, bottom line.—For “was” read “is.”

Vol. I., page 391, line 5.—For “the English” read “The English Press.”

Vol. I., page 420.—Eamonn Price was Assistant Director, and later Director of Organisation.

Vol. I., page 430.—General Crozier, then head of the Auxiliaries, in his *Impressions and Recollections*, declares that Mac Curtain was “murdered by Irish policemen, not Sinn Feiners.”

Vol. I., page 448.—General Crozier, in his *Impressions and Recollections*, admits the existence of the murder gang, or, as he calls it, “the vicious gang.”

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INTRODUCTION

WHILE Ireland was still staggering under the blow of Michael Collins's death, and distracted by the horrors of civil war, I undertook to write the life of my dead friend. I undertook it as a labour of love, because I felt that circumstances had placed me in a position of peculiar advantage to do him justice, and to do justice to the movement of which he was the child, the embodiment, and the full expression. There were many abler writers than I, but none of these had the same intimate knowledge, none could speak with the same confidence of what Collins stood for, the atmosphere of ideas in which he lived, the spirit and outlook of himself and of the band of workers who were his colleagues and comrades. For, that movement, of which he was so great and splendid a part, made up my whole life for many years, from childhood until the tragedy of his death :

“ Dom is dleacht a leacht do líonadh,
Dom is córa a sgeol do sgaoileadh.”

There were those who wished me to produce at once a work evolved in hot haste, amid the bitter passions aroused by the Treaty controversy and the Civil War, in which the heroic personality of Michael

Collins should be exploited in the interests of the Irish Free State, then struggling for existence. Such an idea was abhorrent to me. It would be a poor monument to a great man to produce, under the name of his biography, a piece of party propaganda, or an officially-inspired representation of facts, in support of any side in ephemeral controversies. I determined to wait until the furies of the Civil War had abated, and people, released from an atmosphere of passion and violence, could make some effort to view the story of Ireland's last great effort for freedom in historical retrospect. Meanwhile I confined my activities to collecting material for the biography.

In 1923 I resigned my membership of Dail Eireann, and retired from political life. In 1924 I left the National Army, and then, and not till then, free from official censorship, did I put pen to paper.

For two years I have laboured single-handed at this task, striving, under great difficulties, to provide adequate data for the future historian of a great period in the story of Ireland.

I carried out this work under depressing circumstances. The fine spirit of comradeship which had bound together all the fellow-workers in the contest with England had been destroyed by the collapse of national unity. Cleavage was followed by general disintegration. The fine enthusiasm which inspired the heroisms of the struggle against English rule had been dimmed and quenched by the ugly happenings of the Civil War ; and the country had relapsed

into a mood of cynicism in which the lofty ideals of a few years before met with small response. Many people seemed anxious to forget the brave and brilliant achievements of the years 1916 to 1921.

Working in such an atmosphere was, in some ways, a discouragement ; but it was also an incentive. In placing on record those facts that were not known, and those that had been forgotten, so that my countrymen and the world might understand our ideas and our outlook, the faith that inspired us, and what that faith enabled us to do—in doing this, I felt I was doing work which might be of service to the nation, which might help to clear away confusions and controversies, and inspire further unselfish service for Ireland in the old spirit, with the old ideal. That ideal, the ideal of Michael Collins, was, as his latest writings show as unequivocally as his earliest, a free, united, un-partitioned, Irish-speaking Ireland, proudly preserving its historic culture and its national integrity, freed not only from English military occupation and political domination, but from the predominance of English influence, whether in the social, intellectual, economic, political or cultural spheres—in short, an Ireland as Irish as Denmark is Danish.

The revolutionary struggle which began in 1916 and ended in 1922 was only the latest phase of a movement which began many years earlier. To give an adequate history of the entire movement I should go back much further than the time of Michael Collins.

I should go back to the last century, to the founding of the Gaelic League, and the early work of William Rooney and Arthur Griffith. The intellectual father of this movement was Thomas Davis, the greatest of all thinkers on Irish problems, the first to formulate a clear, coherent "philosophy of Irish Ireland." The movement also owed something to the inspiration of the Fenians. Michael Collins was a child of that movement. He was a schoolboy when the gospel of Irish Ireland was being preached by Douglas Hyde, MacNeill and Pearse, by Griffith and Rooney. His boyish mind was fed with tales of the Fenians, stirred with Irish patriotic poems and writings. He was the inheritor of a great and indestructible tradition, deep-rooted in the soul of the Irish nation, a tradition that seven hundred years of English force and policy had vainly striven to uproot, a tradition that seems almost supernatural in its obstinate immortality. Michael Collins was a great reaper where others had sown.

In this book, as I say, I have dealt with the latest phase of a great movement, perhaps the most difficult phase, for it was the time when ideas were translated into actions; and vital ideas, translated into popular action, become clouded and obscured. The difficulties of the contemporary historian of a revolutionary period are many, and in this case they were quite exceptional. The nature of our work was such that, of much of it no records could be kept; many records were captured by the enemy; many were lost or destroyed in the course of the war;

and many documents were burned for safety. A number of the principal actors in the drama are dead. For a great many details I had to depend upon the memories of a few men and women; and human memory, even in regard to events so recent, I have found a very fallible thing. I had also to discount the tendency of some persons, to exaggerate the importance of events or incidents of which they had knowledge, or to exaggerate the importance of the part played by themselves in such transactions. I can confidently assert that if any person who had not been a participant in the struggle, and had no means of judging the truth of what he was told, were to compile a history from personal narratives, he would publish many mis-statements and many extravagances.

I have endeavoured, with sincere and conscientious effort, to place on record all the essential facts, as far as I knew or could ascertain them, of the life-work of Collins, and the final phase of the Irish struggle for freedom from 1916 to 1922. What immediately concerned Collins I have dealt with in what some may think exhaustive detail. In particular I have sought to place on record the services of many humble, but effective, fellow-workers.

In giving a presentation of Michael Collins, of his personality, his everyday life and his work, I aimed, not at summing up my impressions in a vivid pen-picture, but at giving the greatest possible number of data for the reader to judge by.

I had no desire to stir up the dying embers of recent controversies, and endeavoured, as far as possible, to speak nothing but kind words of my fellow-Irishmen. In describing follies and crimes against the nation ; in defending the memory of a great man, unfairly treated and maligned, I have, I think, carried charity very far ; but some plain speaking was necessary.

I have had to record many atrocities by agents of the English Government in Ireland ; but it would be unfair to hold the English people responsible for these outrages, of which they were kept in ignorance. I had and have no enmity to the English people ; for their many fine qualities and great achievements I have a warm admiration. The ground of our quarrel with them was their claim to possess and exploit our country, to which they had and have no right whatever. All we demanded was to be left alone. English civilisation and culture are, no doubt, great things, and English methods of government seem to suit the English people ; but under them our country decayed, physically, socially, industrially, economically, in wealth, in population, in culture and in every way. We believed it was desirable to get rid of them, and were never convinced to the contrary by the English arguments of batons, bullets and bayonets. In the end we learned to meet brute force and cunning with their own weapons, and baffle them ; and the outrages of the Black and Tans proved ineffective.

In that ugly warfare I gladly acknowledge that the

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ordinary English soldiers, for the most part, behaved in a kindly and generous manner in the unpleasant tasks they had to perform.

I have to thank the Irish Free State Government, the relatives, and some of the friends of Michael Collins, for giving me access to various important letters and documents in their possession. I have to thank the *New York American* for permission to quote from some of Michael Collins's latest writings, contributed to its pages. I have to thank over a hundred persons for information supplied, which has been used in this work.

In using Irish names and titles which have become familiar, such as "Seamus" and "Dail Eireann," I have omitted the accents. It has long been my opinion that too many accents are used in the conventional spelling of Irish, and that we could advantageously learn a lesson from Scots Gaelic, in which accents are only used when they are necessary to avoid ambiguity.

I have no more to say. I have done my best in a difficult task, in the hope that this true story of a great Irishman, a brave and loyal servant of his country, may be of service to Ireland.

PIARAS BEASLAI.

Sandycove, Co. Dublin.

1st September, 1922.

MICHAEL COLLINS AND THE MAKING OF A NEW IRELAND

VOLUME I

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Early Years

ON the Southern seaboard of Ireland there is a country of hills and dells, with a rock-bound coast indented by numerous creeks and inlets, which was known in the history of Ireland as Cairbre, or Carbery, in the County of Cork. Its population of fishers and farmers, and the merchants of its town, are mostly persons of pure Gaelic descent ; the older people speak the Gaelic tongue. There was in that neighbourhood but one foreign settlement, the town of Bandon, that Protestant stronghold on whose gates Dean Swift proposed to inscribe :—

“ Turk, Jew or Atheist
May enter here,
But not a Papist.”

It was from the blood of the Gaels of these sea-side hills, custodians of the language and traditions of the ancient ruling race, that Micheál O Coileáin, known in English as Michael Collins, was sprung. The tribe to which he belonged was one that had been rooted in the soil for countless

generations, which cannot be said of any other chosen leader of the nation for the past 250 years, with the exception of Daniel O'Connell. The O Coileáins were formerly lords of Uí Chonaill, now Upper and Lower Connelloe, in Co. Limerick, and Michael could claim to be descended from a tribe of chieftains whose prowess in warfare won high renown.

In the ancient topographical poem of Giolla na Naomh O hUidhrin, there is the following reference to the family:—

Uí Conaill catha Mumhan
 Toirteamhail an tiomsughadh
 Ratheaghlach ris nach dual dréim
 Sluagh cathfeadhach O cCuiléin.

“ The Ui Conaill of the battalion of Munster
 Ample is the gathering
 A great family with whom it is not fitting to
 contend
 Is the battle-trooped host of the O Coileáins.”
 He could also claim to be of bardic blood.

One of his ancestral relatives was Seán O Coileáin, the celebrated eighteenth century poet, whose fine “ Lament over the Ruins of the Abbey of Timoleague ” has been made familiar to English readers by the translations of Mangan and Sir Samuel Ferguson.

About four miles from the prosperous little town of Clonakilty on the one side, and three miles from the beautiful, cliff-surrounded bay of Roscarbery on the other, is a small cluster of houses at a meeting of roads known as “ Sam’s

Cross." It is called after a highwayman of old days, one Sam Wallace, who "carried on business" at the cross-roads, a kind of modern Robin Hood, who, it is told, gave to the poor what he took from the rich. Here is a veritable nest of the O Coileáin tribe. An ancient tavern, one of the oldest in Ireland, with a signboard painted with a quaint old inscription, has been in the possession of the Collinses for generations, and is at present occupied by a cousin of the dead Chief. On the other side of the road is the house in which his mother was born. A short distance away is a wooded hill known to present day English-speakers as "Woodfield," but more correctly called by the older people "Pál Beag," which may mean "small wall" or "small paling." It was in a house on the slope of this hill, now a ruined memento of the Black-and-Tan Terror, that Mícheál O Coileáin first saw the light.

That so remarkable a son should have a remarkable father is not, perhaps, surprising, and old Michael Collins was a very remarkable man indeed. Born in 1815, he married late in life, and Michael, the youngest son of a large and vigorous family, was born when his father had attained the age of 75. The elder Michael Collins was a farmer; he was also a builder and carpenter, whose skill won him a high local reputation; but he possessed qualifications which one does not usually associate with these useful occupations. He was a classical scholar with a good knowledge of Greek, Latin and French, and—what is an unusual combination of talents—

a strong bent for mathematics. He was, moreover, a man of wide reading, a vast store of general information, and an extraordinarily retentive memory, even in his old age. He was equally at home in the English and the Irish languages. He owed his exceptional education to one of the old-world "hedge schoolmasters," Diarmuid O Súilliobháin, a cousin on his mother's side, of whom he used to tell that he graduated in a Belgian university, and was a personal acquaintance of Wolfe Tone's. Through this remarkable father of his, young Michael Collins could bridge a century and establish touch with that former great and ill-fated effort to throw off the English yoke in 1798.

Old Michael Collins was sixty years of age when he married, in 1875, Mary Anne O'Brien, daughter of James O'Brien, of Sam's Cross, then a girl of 20. She was a handsome girl, who was left fatherless at the age of 16, and had to care for a delicate mother. The inequality of years did not prevent the marriage from being a very happy one, and eight children were born of it, Margaret, John, Johanna, Mary, Helena, Patrick, Kate, and finally Michael, who was born in 1890. All of the progeny were exceptionally strong, vigorous and intelligent; all save Michael are alive to-day.

Being the youngest of the family, it was only natural that Michael should be the pet of his elder brothers and sisters. As often happens with the youngest children in large Irish families, the care of him devolved largely on his eldest sisters, Maggie, Hannie and Mary, who showered

on him a wealth of affection. He is described as having been an exceptionally handsome and good-tempered baby.

At the early age of four and a half years Michael was sent to school to the Lisavaird National School, then taught by the late Mr. Denis Lyons. Denis Lyons was a remarkable man, and his influence at that early age had much to do with forming Michael's patriotic ideas. Lyons was an old member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, once better known as "the Fenians," and advocated the ideals of this body—the seeking of the independence of Ireland—by armed force, if necessary, in the face of strong opposition from the local clergy and other influential persons. The courage required to do this on the part of a National Schoolmaster, at that time, will hardly be appreciated by the younger generation. In manner Lyons was rough. Like most of the old type of teachers, he was a stern disciplinarian, who believed in the adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child." His sternness did not awaken any rebelliousness in young Michael's breast, and in after life he always spoke of his old master with affection.

It is a remarkable fact, and a commentary on the state of the country at the time, that, though Michael's father and mother and most of the older folks of the district spoke Irish, he and his brothers and sisters were allowed to grow up without any knowledge of the language. It was not taught in the school, and at home his parents only spoke Irish among themselves when they did not wish the children to know what

they were saying. This state of affairs was a common one in the Irish-speaking districts, where a tradition survived from the days of famines and evictions that parents were handicapping their children's chances in life by bringing them up Irish-speaking. However, Irish was "in the air" in the district, and the very English of the people abounded in expressive Irish words and phrases, for which there are often no English equivalent. All these words and phrases Michael acquired, and they were continually on his lips in after life, and up to the day of his death.

Michael proved an apt scholar, with a taste for knowledge, but the National School education of these days was poor pabulum for so active a brain. Close to the school was a forge to which the little boy used to pay regular visits after school hours, attracted by something more appealing to his imagination than the dry lists of names and dates of the school curriculum. The blacksmith, James Santry (still happily living), was the son of a man who had forged pikes in '48 and '67 in that very forge, and grandson of a man who took part in the rising of 1798 at the "Big Cross" in Shannonvale. Many a tale he had to tell of the fights and plots of Fenian days, and Smith O'Brien's gallant and hopeless attempt at insurrection. One can imagine how the ardent heart of little Michael beat, how his eyes shone as he saw passing before his mind's eye those episodes of patriot heroism and adventure. No doubt, like many another boy, he dreamed of emulating their exploits; unlike most other boys, he lived to surpass them.

That he had already some faint conception of his destiny is shown by the fact that, discussing the question of evictions with his school-fellows, he pointed to the homes of the "land grabbers," and spoke of the time when *he* would see justice done and restitution made.

If any boy had a chance of being spoiled it was Michael. At home he was the pet of the family, at school an immense favourite with his school-fellows. He excelled in sports and in class, yet his kindly and generous nature was in no way affected by this. He took a peculiar pleasure, unusual in one so young, in the company of aged people, and was never tired of listening to stories of the olden times.

In 1899, when Michael was nine years of age, a "new house" was built for the family on the site of the old. Here Mrs. Collins was able to indulge her passion for flowers, a love which Michael shared.

The education which Michael received at school played a much smaller part in shaping his mind and developing his character than home influences. His father was, as mentioned, a man of scholarly bent and intellectual tastes, and all his family were fond of reading—a very unusual attribute of a country family in County Cork at that time, or even nowadays. Still more remarkable, their reading was not merely trashy fiction, but the best books obtainable. Michael, from an early age, was an earnest student of Thomas Davis, probably the wisest, most far-seeing, and all-embracing of all Irish leaders and teachers in his nationalism, and there can

be no doubt that the teachings of that sage and patriot profoundly influenced his outlook in after life. In his broad, all-embracing love of the Irish people he was at one with Davis.

Wolfe Tone and Emmet were also heroes of his, and he loved to hear his uncle sing songs of them. He took great interest in the writings of A. M. and T. D. Sullivan, particularly their records of the struggles and sacrifices of the Fenians. The novels of Banim and Kickham, with their vivid, human pictures of Irish life, also appealed to him. His brother Sean recalls seeing him cry bitterly when reading Kickham's "Knocknagow." Among others he read many of the novels of Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens, and the poetry of Moore. He was noted for special fondness for poetry, which was curiously combined with a bent for reading anything on engineering, or mathematics that came his way. He was also fond, like all healthy boys, of tales of adventure and detective stories.

It will be noted how his early associates, surroundings and reading helped to form his outlook on national affairs, and inspire that warm patriotism which was the ruling passion of his life. His milieu was exceptional. At that time Ireland was permeated with national cynicism and pessimism. The failure of the Parnellite movement, and the demoralising effect of the split that followed, had darkened the national outlook, and the adherents of the old faith of Tone and Mitchel and Davis were few and far between. Many had lost heart.

Michael, from his earliest days, was in contact

with men and books that filled his mind with thoughts of the struggle for Irish freedom. He formed his political views very early, and soon made up his mind that the attempt to free Ireland from the English yoke by political agitation alone would never get us much further ; and the movement led by Mr. Redmond, then the dominant figure in Irish political life, evoked no enthusiasm or favour from him.

One formative influence on his mind in those early schoolboy days was a little weekly paper called " The United Irishman," edited in Dublin by one Arthur Griffith, a name then little known. Copies of this paper occasionally found their way to Clonakilty, and in the doctrine of that courageous journal he found a note that rang true to him. Like many another of the younger generation he owed much of his early education in national politics to Arthur Griffith. Among his papers, treasured up from childhood, I find a number of copies of the " United Irishman " for the year 1902 (when he was only twelve years of age), with passages from Griffith's editorials marked in them. He also read with avidity " The Leader," edited then as now by Mr. D. P. Moran, which preached the doctrines of the Irish Language Movement, and the Irish Industrial Revival.

One result of Michael's reading was that at an unusually early age he conceived rather strong views on the subject of the Irish clergy, views which his experience in later life caused him to modify and finally abandon altogether. He noted that the priests as a body, with a few

honourable exceptions, had been bitter opponents of the '48 and Fenian movements, and in his own time that all their influence was thrown into the scale against any form of "physical force" or insurrectionary movement in Ireland. With boyish intolerance he came to regard them as a force for evil in national politics, and did not hesitate to express that opinion to all and sundry—even to the kind old priest for whom, for several years, he served Mass. This anti-clerical phase reached its climax in his first years in London, when he startled an Irish literary society by a paper denouncing the Irish clergy in an unmerciful fashion. It is amusing, in the light of this boyish production, to remember how much assistance Michael received from members of the Irish clergy during the fight for freedom, and how many warm friendships with priests and bishops resulted from it.

Physically Michael was exceptionally strong, healthy and full of energy, and escaped most childish ailments. He could wrestle successfully with boys several years older. He was fond of running, jumping, and the native sport of "bowling"—a very different thing from the game so denominated in England. He was excessively fond of horses, a fearless rider, and it is told of him that he once got on the back of a three-year-old colt that had never been ridden, and kept on his back till the animal had run himself out. When quite a little lad he used to drive the trap for his mother and sister, who had perfect confidence in him.

That broad, friendly gregarious nature, which

was so outstanding a characteristic of his in later years, was already noticeable. He was equally at home with young and old, with boys of his own age, and greyhaired men and women.

"Pál beg" is situated in a rich and beautiful valley. A small river, whose banks are much overgrown with bushes, runs about 400 yards from the Collins's home, and here Michael with his sister Katie, and his brother Pat, spent much of their spare time. The boys loved to bathe in the deep holes of the river, and to fish—more or less unsuccessfully—for trout. Strangely enough, though born and bred so near the sea, Michael never learned to swim.

A favourite trip of the children on Sundays was to Roscarbery, and thence, along the cliff-bound coast to "Carraig Chlíodhna," the Rock of Clíodhna, called after the queen of the Munster fairies, famed in song and story, an awe-inspiring precipice of wonderful cliffs with foaming breakers beneath. On the top of this cliff the children spent many a pleasant hour, and Michael heard many a wonderful tale of Clíodhna's enchantments, of wrecks and perils, and drownings and treasure trove. Not far away was Castlefreke, originally Rath Barry, an old castle and demesne which belonged formerly to the Barrys, and later came into the hands of the Frekes. It is now deserted, and the fine extensive grounds are all a wilderness.

Amid such scenes the mind of young Michael ripened until the time when the serious concern of "what to do with our boy" began to trouble his anxious mother. The boy's bent was all

for engineering and mathematics, his spirit was enterprising and adventurous, but his mother was determined to see him established in the safe and unadventurous future of the Civil Service. Her health began to fail, and she wished to see the future of her youngest secured "before anything happened to her." At that time West Cork, and particularly Cairbre, was noted for the number of members it supplied to the British Postal Service—more, it was said, than any other district in Ireland or England. So, very reluctantly, at the age of 13½ years, Michael went to Clonakilty to be prepared for an examination for a Post Office Boy Clerkship.

In Clonakilty he lived with his eldest sister, Mrs. O'Driscoll, whose husband ran a local newspaper. He attended the National School there, and, after passing all the standards, joined the Civil Service Class, conducted by the Principal, Mr. John Crowley, and by Mr. John Blewett. In his spare time he wrote reports of minor football matches and bowling contests for his brother-in-law's paper, and learned to use the typewriter. When only 15 years of age he passed his examination.

His sister Johanna was already employed in the Post Office in London, and the mother felt she could safely send her boy to the big Babylon, to the loving care of his elder sister. So in July, 1906, the little lad of 15 set out for the great metropolis where he was to learn his first lessons in the struggle for life, to take up a position as boy clerk in the Post Office Savings Bank in West Kensington.

CHAPTER II.

Early Years in London

MICHAEL COLLINS was still a small lad, though sturdy and well-built, when he arrived in London and took his quarters at the rooms in 5 Netherwood Road, West Kensington, which were destined to be his home for nine of the most impressionable years of his life. He grew rapidly and soon shot up into a tall athletic-looking youth.

As has been said, he had no penchant for the class of work to which he was now set in the Post Office Savings Bank. To a youth of ambition, full of ideas and enthusiasm, the dull routine of Civil Service work had little appeal, and afforded small outlet for that amazing energy which was to work such wonders in after life. However, he learned useful lessons in office methods and clerical work in his first employment, and the energies which his occupation did not absorb were turned into Irish channels—the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association.

At the Post Office Savings Bank he met many Irish boys, and, with his genius for friendship, soon found himself at home with them. He joined the Geraldine Football and Hurling Club, then in its infancy, and subsequently became

Secretary of the Club. He joined the Gaelic League, and became an ardent student of the Irish language, attending classes regularly. It is an ironical example of the state of Ireland at the time that a son of Irish-speaking parents should have to wait till he came to London to receive his first lessons in Irish.

In the days of national demoralisation and discouragement which followed the Parnell split, in 1893, a small band of far-seeing men, one of them, Eoin MacNeill, afterwards Minister of Education of the Irish Free State, established an organization called the Gaelic League with the object of saving the Irish language from the extinction which seemed to threaten it. The little organization grew slowly but steadily, and became a force in Irish public life, so that the Irish Parliamentary Party, then practically supreme in their control of national public opinion, and jealous of any rivalry, began to look at it askance. From the germ of the Language Movement sprung that larger, wider movement known to the outside world as the "Sinn Fein Movement," but which is more descriptively called the "Irish Ireland Movement." Strictly speaking it was not a political movement; it aimed at creating national self-reliance, and inducing Irishmen to speak their own language, to cultivate their own music, art, literature, and games, and to support Irish manufactures by purchasing articles of native production in preference to importations. Michael's early reading of "The United Irishman," and "The Leader," had imbued him with the

doctrines and principles of the Irish Ireland Movement; and these remained the guiding principles of his creed, and are enunciated with characteristic clearness and logic in his very latest writings. He was convinced of the absolute necessity of preserving the Irish Language, and on one occasion, in 1918, I remember him saying to me very earnestly: "If we get safely through this business I intend to give up everything else and retire to an Irish-speaking district, and stay there until I have a complete mastery of Irish. I don't think it will take me long."

He was not able to devote much time to the study of Irish, as he was at this period attending an evening course at King's College with a view to presenting himself for some of the higher examinations in the Civil Service when his age permitted. He attained a certain knowledge of Irish, and was able to understand and even converse in it to some extent; but, except during his imprisonment in Frongoch in 1916, he never had an opportunity to make a prolonged and systematic effort to master the language.

The Gaelic Athletic Association represented the athletic side of the Irish Ireland Movement, and into this Michael threw himself with all the enthusiasm of a healthy and vigorous youth. He was a fine all-round athlete, and always competed at the athletic events in sports held under G.A.A. auspices on Bank holidays. Being equally good at various branches of athletics, he used to make a general entry. He particularly excelled in the long jump. He played both

football and hurling, but the latter was his favourite game. Indeed, though this historic Gaelic game (mentioned in the oldest extant records) is hardly known outside Irish circles, it can be confidently asserted that no finer game for young men exists among the sports of the world.

Curiously enough, it was in connection with football that Michael came into "his first fight" in national affairs. It was a rule of the Gaelic Athletic Association that no member could belong to or recognise any other athletic association, and those who played football according to the rules of the English Athletic Association were liable to expulsion. Many Irish athletes in London, however, found the attraction of "Soccer" football too strong for them, and an attempt to enforce the rule led to much trouble in the clubs. Michael, then about eighteen years of age, and secretary of the Geraldine Club, threw the weight of his influence and exhortations on the side of the enforcement of the rule, and preached to all and sundry the doctrine of "no Soccer for Gaels." Those who may think it narrow-minded to introduce national prejudices into sport should remember that at the time one of the deadliest foes of Irish Nationalism, one of the most insidious forces that threatened the Irish-Ireland ideal, was what Collins at a later date called the "peaceful penetration" of Ireland by English games and amusements, and the social influences they brought in their train. In the event, nine or ten clubs broke up over the dispute

and only three remained ; but these, including Michael's club, the Geraldines, flourished, and Michael became treasurer of the London County Board of the joint clubs.

There was, however, another organization which was destined to have a considerable influence upon his after life. It was only natural that a youth who had been reared on tales of the Fenians and '98, should be attracted by the prospect of a more direct way of gaining the freedom of Ireland. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, which is the correct name of the Fenian organization of 1865, was never disbanded. Those who believed in the old ideal of striving for the independence of Ireland maintained their secret organization, biding their opportunity. In the early days of the Parnellite Movement the organization was extremely strong, and Parnell derived no small part of his success and power from his successful endeavour to enlist their co-operation. They, with their American allies, the Clan-na-Gael, remained a very powerful influence in Irish politics. The conversion of Gladstone to Home Rule, the seeming triumph of so-called "constitutional" methods and the "entente cordiale," "the union of hearts and hands," which confiding Irish politicians made popular, undoubtedly weakened the strength of the Fenians and diminished their ranks ; but they still remained a force to be reckoned with, as being the most single-minded and patriotic body of men in Ireland ; and after the Parnellite split Parnell turned to them with confidence for the support which weaklings denied him.

In the days of discouragement which followed the split, the Brotherhood, having no immediate programme, contented itself with keeping its organization intact and endeavouring to make its influence felt in various departments of public life. The rising of the Irish-Ireland movement gave a big fillip to the organization. The young devotees of the Language movement and kindred national activities joined the organization in considerable numbers, although the very existence of the Brotherhood was hardly suspected by the general public. The writer (who was a member practically from boyhood) will surprise most people by informing them that Mr. Arthur Griffith, at the time he founded the Sinn Fein organization, was a member of the Brotherhood, and that the reasons why he left some years later were not any objections to the aims or objects of the association. The Irish Republican Brotherhood realised that the secrecy of their organization handicapped their powers of national propaganda, and they welcomed the existence of an open non-revolutionary movement in which sound basic principles of nationality were taught, as affording a field for recruiting their membership.

Michael Collins was not more than two years in London when he was admitted to membership of the Brotherhood. He was "sworn in" at a meeting held in Barnsbury Hall in November, 1909. He was promoted, after little more than a year, to the position of Section Master, and in 1914 became Treasurer of the organization for London and the South of England.

Michael was only eighteen years of age when he was called on to read a paper at one of the Sinn Fein branches in London. He chose for his subject "The Catholic Church in Ireland," and startled his hearers by a violent attack upon the influence of the Catholic Hierarchy and clergy upon national affairs in Ireland. One can imagine what consternation the anti-clerical tirade of this hot-headed youth must have created amongst his hearers. The paper was a violent one, full of all the intemperance and exaggeration of a boy, but fortified with facts and figures, and the discerning must have perceived that the author of the paper was a lad of exceptional ability and promise. This anti-clerical period was only a passing phase in his intellectual development. Despite this bombshell, he was again requested to read a paper to the branch in the following year, and this time chose for his subject "The Irish Famine of 1847." In this paper he carefully marshals the facts and figures of an overwhelming indictment of the British Government as altogether responsible for the so-called "famine," the death by starvation of over a million Irish men and women.

During this period of his life he was an omnivorous and insatiable reader, and, by his wide excursions in the realm of books, supplied the defects in his early education. His sister, who took a keen interest in his intellectual development, and used often to sit up till after midnight with him, discussing books and writers, mentions, as among his favourite modern authors,

Thomas Hardy, George Meredith, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennet, Joseph Conrad, Swinburne, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats, Padraig Colum, and James Stephens—not a bad foundation for a broad and humane culture. He was a great admirer of George Bernard Shaw, and was considerably influenced by his writings. He also took a great interest in the plays of the younger dramatists who wrote for the Abbey Theatre.

In the busy and strenuous years of his after life, men who had been accustomed to think of him only as a man of affairs were often astonished to discover in the course of conversation with him, how wide had been his reading, and how extensive was his general information.

His favourite companion at that period was a youth named Seán Hurley, whose family was connected with the Collinses through marriage. Seán, who was at the time Secretary of the Council for England of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, was killed in the fighting in Church Street, Dublin, in Easter Week 1916, in an attempt to recapture a barricade from which we had been driven.

He had many other comrades, some of whom have since played an important part in public affairs in Ireland. Among these may be mentioned Mr. Patrick Belton, Chairman of the Geraldines at the time Michael joined ; Mr. Sam Maguire, who subsequently did sterling work for him during the years of storm and struggle ; Mr. Sean Gallagher, still resident in London ; Colm O Murchadha, now Clerk of the Dail ; Joe Furlong, now a Major in the Free State Army ;

Pat Brennan, now an official of the Free State Senate; Pádraic O Conaire, the well-known Gaelic author; Dan Murphy and Mick Donoghue. A full list of Michael's friends and comrades of this period would be impossible; and in every case the friendship remained unbroken to the end. He had a genius for friendship, and, despite long absence, he never lost touch with those he had cared for. One of them, speaking of this period, says: "What impressed me most about him was his extraordinary loyalty to his friends." He paid so much attention to each old friend, he wrote to him so constantly and cordially in after life, in the midst of his thousandfold cares, that each imagined himself a specially favoured one. One usually associates the warm-hearted, gay-mannered, sociable man in one's mind with an idea of carelessness, forgetfulness, but Michael was as meticulously exact in the duties of friendship as in the transactions of business. His generosity was as marked as his thoughtfulness; many a "poor fellow down on his luck" was befriended by him at a time when his own means were meagre indeed.

On social occasions he had a favourite recitation, "The Fighting Race," by Mr. J. I. C. Clarke, an Irish-American poet of note, written on the occasion of the sinking of the American warship "Maine" in Cuban waters. The poet depicts three Irishmen in America, "Kelly and Burke and Shea," commenting on the large number of Irish names, and particularly of their own names, in the "list of the dead." From this they dwell on how their names recur again

and again in all stories of war and battle all over the world.

“ Oh the fighting races don’t die out
If they seldom die in bed
For love is first in their hearts no doubt.”

In after life it was our delight, on the occasion of any festivity, to induce “ Mick ” to give us this recitation. He was not exactly a good reciter, but he repeated the poem with a whole-hearted appreciation of its force, its pathos, its humour, that was very pleasant to listen to.

He possessed then, as in after life, an extraordinary power of instantly and persistently concentrating every energy of his mind, his whole mental battery so to speak, on the work before him, and, when the work was accomplished, of relaxing completely and whole-heartedly. Verses written by one of his companions of this period, Mr. Humphry Murphy, deserve reproduction here, not so much for their poetic merit as for the true and appreciative picture of the man on his social side, as seen by those who knew him best :—

“ Old London lit its millions of lights
For the boys were having a night of nights
And Mick was among the boys.
Mick was a youth with a manly air,
Whose golden laugh was a cure for care.
In the shake of his hand was a handsome share
Of this old world’s joys.

“ A worker was Mick—but, work being done,
What a rollicking child of furious fun.
 Ay, Mick had a wonderful way.
What he said should be done and done aright,
But old songs he loved, whether stern or light,
And sometimes himself would finish the night
 With ‘ Kelly and Burke and Shea.’

“ Years fled ; and garlands by greedy fame
Are wreathed around the simple name
 And I stand by a statesman’s chair.
And we’re talking again of London days,
Of the hurling fields, of the songs and plays,
And still has the statesman the boyish ways
 And the laugh of the devil-may-care.

“ And here by Glasnevin’s hallowed bed,
I seek not the dauntless warrior dead,
 Only the burst of laughter light—
Only the handshake, the mirthful eye—
The voice of a boy who couldn’t die.
No caoine I chant, no sad good-bye,
 Only good-night, Mick, good-night.”

Although called “ Michael ” by his family, he speedily became known to his intimates as “ Mick ” ; and from this period to his death he was known to his comrades as “ Mick Collins,” although in his last two years he was commonly referred to as “ The Big Man ” or “ The Big Fellow.” He often signed his letters with the simple name “ Mick.”

In 1911 Collins first made the acquaintance of one who was to play a very big part in his

after life. This was Joe O'Reilly, now Colonel O'Reilly, the President's aide-de-camp, the faithful companion and right-hand man of Michael in all his labours and perils in Ireland. Joe was then employed in the Post Office, and made his acquaintance through athletic interests. The name of this devoted follower will frequently recur in this narrative.

Reference has already been made to Michael's early study of the "United Irishman," the precursor of "Sinn Féin." It is interesting to read this testimony from his sister:—

"There is no doubt that Arthur Griffith, through Sinn Féin, was an inspiration to Mícheál, and was largely responsible for his subsequent career."

During all these years in London Michael lived exclusively in Irish circles, and all his tastes and interests were primarily Irish. A large proportion of those Irish, who settle in the mighty British metropolis, become absorbed in their surroundings; but there is always a larger number who resist their environment, form an Irish colony in the midst of the strangers, and keep in close touch with Ireland. The Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association, and similar bodies provide them with a social life redolent of their native country. Michael was typical of these. All his holidays were spent at home at Woodfield, where he particularly cultivated the society of the old Irish-speaking people, and loved to "draw them out," and hear their old tales and traditions.

“London had little appeal to him; his inclination was for country life in Ireland,” writes his sister, Johanna. “His ambition was to return to Ireland; with this end in view he sat for an examination connected with the Irish Agricultural movement about 1912 or 1913, and, though he had not studied the required subjects—mostly agricultural and technical—he was offered a course of training at Athlone. This he refused for financial reasons, as he wanted to be in Dublin and obtain scholarships.

“He left the Savings Bank about 1910, and, though he passed an examination for a higher grade in the Civil Service, he took a position with a firm of stockbrokers—Horner and Co.—where he obtained good financial experience. He left this firm during the Moratorium after the declaration of war in 1914, but in a short time obtained an appointment in the Guaranty Trust Co. of New York, in Lombard Street, where he remained until the end of 1915. He liked the work there better than anything he had previously done, and his colleagues, mostly Scottish, better than any he had known up to then. I know he looked back with pleasure on the time spent in the Guaranty Trust, where he must have added considerably to his knowledge of international finance.”

After the death of Michael Collins the “Guaranty News,” the journal of the Guaranty Trust Company, contained the following reference to him from the pen of Mr. Robert Mackey, the Assistant Manager of the London House:—

“ Although his activities took him to a somewhat different sphere from that of banking, the name of Michael Collins cannot be omitted from record. He joined the Guaranty in 1915, and his duties were simply those of ordinary bank clerk, but he was recognised as a man of considerable ability. It is conceivable that during his employment with the company he would have many interests outside those by which he earned his daily bread ; but if he had, there was no indication of them in his habits, and he was never unwilling to do his share of late work, which at this time was continuous. Only on very rare occasions did his sunny smile disappear, and this was usually the result of one of his fellow clerks making some disparaging and, probably, unthinking remark about his beloved Ireland. Then he would look as if he might prove a dangerous enemy. His stay with the Company was short, and nothing was heard of him until his name figured prominently in the Easter, 1916, riots (*sic*) at Dublin Post Office. From this point his life was a stormy one, but the few remaining members of the staff, who were privileged to know him, will never believe that he could do an unworthy act.”

CHAPTER III.

The Irish Volunteers.

THE outbreak of the European War in August, 1914, marks the beginning of the series of events which brought Michael Collins, in a few brief years, to the foremost position in the Irish nation. It was just about this time that a Company of Irish Volunteers was established in London, of which he at once became an active member.

It is necessary, however, for a proper understanding of this series of events to go back a little further and trace the history of the Irish Volunteers from their foundation.

A great deal of mystery and misunderstanding exists with regard to the public and secret history of the Irish Volunteers, and the events that led up to Easter Week. The Insurrection of 1916 was a surprise not only to the British Government and people, but to Irish politicians and public men, and many others in Ireland, and far-fetched theories were indulged in as to the origin of the Rising. The real essential facts are now made public for the first time.

The establishment of the Irish Volunteers is usually depicted as a spontaneous uprising of national sentiment, inspired by the controversy

over the Liberal Government's Home Rule Bill, and the threatened resistance to that act of Carson's "Ulster Volunteers." It was the policy of those responsible for their establishment (of whom I was one) so to depict it. At the present time, however, I can safely reveal a secret, not known even to many of the members of the original Provisional Committee—that it had its origin in an organization already mentioned in these pages—the Irish Republican Brotherhood. In 1911 something of a crisis occurred in this secret organization. Those in control of the body found themselves at loggerheads with a number of young and energetic men with new ideas in the organization. The most prominent figure in the new group was Sean Mac Diarmuda, to whom reference has been already made; others requiring special mention were Bulmer Hobson, Sean MacGarry, and Dr. Patrick MacCartan. With this group was associated the old Fenian veteran, Tom Clarke, who, after serving sixteen years of penal servitude in Portland Prison, came out with spirit unbroken, and again addressed himself to the task of organizing resistance to the British Government in Ireland. The "new blood" in the organization was responsible for the production of "Irish Freedom," a monthly organ, the first for many years to preach the principles of Separatism. I was a member of the Editorial Committee responsible for this production, which undoubtedly had a powerful effect in arousing interest in a point of view which that generation of Irishmen had well nigh forgotten. Amongst

its contributors were the late Terence MacSwiney, and P. S. O'Hegarty, now Secretary to the Irish Post Office. It was in connection with the control of this paper that the dissension in the organization came to a head.

It would be improper to enter here into the details of the controversy. Suffice it to say that a serious split developed, and the majority of the ruling body, finding that the majority of the rank and file were sympathetic to the side espoused by Tom Clarke, decided to retire from the organization, and were accompanied by a number of their adherents. Subsequently to this change, a new departure was made in the work of the organization. Up to this the principal task of the I.R.B. had been to exercise through its members influence on other organizations in a national direction. The drilling of the members of military age was now introduced. Some years previously a semi-military organization for boys on the lines of the Boy Scouts, but with a strong Nationalist atmosphere, had been organized by some active Sinn Feiners and Separatists, under the title of "Fianna Eireann." The Countess Markievicz was President; Mr. Bulmer Hobson, Mr. Sean MacGarry and other I.R.B. men interested themselves actively in the work of this body. It was from young men trained in the Fianna that the I.R.B. secured instructors for its own organization. Prominent among those were Con Colbert (executed after Easter Week), and Liam Mellows.

Despite this military instruction the prospect of the organization ever being in a position to

take military action against England seemed exceedingly remote; even the most sanguine hardly hoped to see it in their generation. Young Irishmen of to-day can hardly conceive the atmosphere of the Ireland of that time, nor the contempt and dislike with which the majority of the Irish people looked upon the advocates of physical force. Even the pacifist Sinn Féiner, who contented himself with working for the language, industries, sports, and music of Ireland, was sneered at, despised, dubbed "crank," and howled down if he dared express disagreement with the policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The blind faith in the then Irish Party, and the efficacy of their methods was almost pathetic. It is difficult for the young Ireland of to-day to realise that the Ireland of only fourteen years ago could have been so docile, so united in unquestioning allegiance to leaders, so intolerant of all differences of opinion, so contemptuous of idealism, so hostile to Separatism.

It must not be deduced from this that the majority of the Irish people wished for English rule or did not desire freedom. It was the very strength of their desire for control of their own affairs which caused them to hand themselves over, blindfolded and shackled, to the despotism of a Party which promised them freedom. Disheartened by the pitiable failure of "physical force movements" in two successive generations, they had given their allegiance to a policy that seemed to promise some practical result; and the experience of the Parnellite split had caused a horror of further dissensions and "factionism,"

and a desire for "unity" of which the ruling politicians availed themselves to stifle all criticism and stamp out all opposition. Originally patriotic in their outlook, the leaders of the Irish Party had become demoralised, both by their association with the Imperial Parliament and the unlimited confidence reposed in them by the Irish people. The advent to power of a Liberal Government, pledged to Home Rule for Ireland, had been foolishly welcomed by the Irish people. It proved the most insidious enemy of Irish nationality, and absolutely dishonest in its Home Rule policy. It had formerly been the practice of British Governments to reward their Irish supporters (quaintly called "loyalists") with place and power. The enlightened Liberal administration introduced a new system of buying up Nationalists. Positions in the gift of the Government began to be secured by the patronage of the Irish Party. University Acts, Insurance Acts, Old Age Pensions Acts, created a fresh host of official appointments, and job-hunting became the order of the day. Lord and Lady Aberdeen slighted the pseudo-aristocrats of "England's faithful garrison in Ireland," and courted the snobbery of the Catholic bourgeoisie. The astute Mr. Birrell, the ablest of Irish Chief Secretaries, flattered the Irish people by witty speeches and declined to imprison popular agitators. All vested interests, all corrupt influences, conspired to support the unquestioned sway of the Irish Party, who acted as the faithful henchmen of the Liberal Government. The bulk of the people, who ardently desired the end of English rule in

Ireland, were duped by the cry of "unity," and the promise of the early passing of a Home Rule Act—which they were led to believe represented the consummation of our national ideals. They were led to regard Sinn Féin as a dangerous faction threatening the unity of the national movement, and consequently as an obstacle on the road to freedom.

In an Ireland doped into an unlimited patience, and credulity, an unlimited confidence in its Party Leaders, and in the British Liberal Government, and a confident expectation of Home Rule, came Sir Edward Carson to save the situation for the physical force party. He, more than any man, is responsible for the events which have created the Irish Free State. He defied law, appealed to force; he preached the doctrines which led to the founding of the Irish Volunteers—and the amazed Irish people, with their pathetic faith in the infallibility of their Party leaders, and the honesty of the British Government, saw that Government recoil before the bluff of the "Ulster Volunteers." They found threats of physical resistance by a minority accepted as a successful argument against justice to a majority. They found that the rifles and parading of the "Ulster Volunteers" were jeopardising the long-expected Home Rule Act.

Here was the opportunity of the I.R.B. Some prominent Irishmen, not connected with that organization, had begun to ask "Why, if Ulstermen can arm and organize to defeat Home Rule (an Act of the British Parliament) can we not arm to defend it?" One gentleman of standing,



MICHAEL COLLINS IN 1922.

Professor Eoin MacNeill, Vice-President of the Gaelic League, asked the question in the Gaelic League official organ, then conducted by the O'Rahilly. The fact that Dr. MacNeill, besides being a man of high standing and reputation, was at the time a supporter of Mr. Redmond, and not suspect of Sinn Féin or revolutionary sympathies, rendered him an ideal advocate and figure-head of such a movement. Members of the I.R.B. urged him and the O'Rahilly to convene a meeting to consider the matter. A meeting of about a dozen, of whom I was one, was held in Wynn's Hotel in October, 1913. The majority of those present were members of the I.R.B., but this was, of course, unknown to the minority. All, however, were tarred with the one brush—association with the "Irish Ireland" movement, which in the popular eye meant suspicion of "Sinn Féinism" or want of loyalty to "the Party." It was felt that an appeal from such a Provisional Committee would be regarded with general suspicion, and receive little popular support, and it was essential to the success of our new movement that it should embrace all elements. Steps were, therefore, taken to secure that the Committee should be representative of all shades of national thought. Some gentlemen prominently identified with the political work of the Redmondite Party consented to accept membership of the Committee. Many others refused; indeed most Redmondite politicians looked on the plan with suspicion from the start.

Despite the cold-shouldering of the Press and

politicians, the movement to establish Irish Volunteers met with an immediate hearty national response. The movement was inaugurated at a crowded public meeting in the Rotunda Rink, the largest public hall in Dublin, at which several thousand men enrolled themselves as Irish Volunteers. The objects of the new body were declared to be:—

“ 1. To secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland.

“ 2. To train, discipline, arm and equip a body of Irish Volunteers for the above purpose.

“ 3. To unite for this purpose Irishmen of every creed and of every party and class.”

The I.R.B. supplied the nucleus of the new body in a number of already partially trained young men. Companies of Volunteers sprang up everywhere. Drilling was carried on vigorously with the assistance of ex-soldiers. Recruits joined in large numbers, not only from the ranks of Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League, but from among the followers of Mr. Redmond.

The British Government, which had allowed the Ulster Volunteers to arm and drill openly for the previous eighteen months to oppose an Act of Parliament, greeted the founding of the Irish Volunteers by immediately prohibiting the importation of arms into Ireland. This was clearly aimed at the Irish Volunteers, as the Ulstermen were already well armed.

On April 24th, 1914, in defiance of this proclamation, a cargo of rifles was landed openly

in Larne in the North, and distributed among the Ulster Volunteers. No steps were taken by the British Government against these Volunteers.

Mr. T. M. Kettle, M.P., a brother of the General Secretary of the Volunteers, Mr. Laurence J. Kettle, became a member of the Provisional Committee; but Mr. Redmond and most of the other members of his Party looked upon the rise of the Volunteers with jealousy, covert disfavour or even open disapproval, and this attitude was reflected by their Press organs. When, however, despite the official boycott, the Volunteers had become a force to be reckoned with in the country, Mr. Redmond began to consider means of gaining control of the organization. First private negotiations were opened with Eoin MacNeill and Colonel Moore; these proving abortive, Mr. Redmond published in the Press on June 9th, 1914, a letter in which he attacked the Provisional Committee as "non-representative," and asked that "the present Provisional Committee should be immediately strengthened by the addition of 25 representative men from different parts of the country nominated at the instance of the Irish Party, and in sympathy with its policy and aims." If this were not done, he hinted, "it would be necessary to fall back on county control and government"—a veiled threat to take steps to split the organization.

The Provisional Committee was at the time preparing to hold a National Convention at which an Executive should be elected. In view, however, of Mr. Redmond's position, and the

threat of a split, it was decided to treat the matter as one of urgency, and, pending the holding of a National Convention, to arrange immediately for County Conventions, at which representatives would be elected to reinforce the Provisional Committee. But an Executive really representative of the Irish Volunteers was the last thing Mr. Redmond desired. What he desired was absolute control of the organization, whose strength he feared ; and in a further letter he explicitly declared that unless the Committee agreed to his adding 25 of his own nominees to its own members, he would call upon his supporters in the Volunteers to break away from the central organization, and form their own County Committees.

Faced with the alternative of surrendering the rights of their members in face of threats, or by their defiance precipitating a split which would imperil the future of their organization, the majority of the members of the Provisional Committee decided to accede, under protest, to Mr. Redmond's demand. I was one of a minority of nine who opposed this decision as a betrayal of our trust to the people we had enrolled. Among the minority were Patrick Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, Con Colbert, and Sean MacDiarmuda, subsequently executed by the British. I may be pardoned for claiming, at the present time, that events proved us right, and showed that the surrender, besides being wrong in principle, was a huge tactical blunder. The majority of the Provisional Committee, after some experience of Mr. Redmond's nominees, were later forced,

in order to save the organization, to do that very thing that they had most dreaded, and face a split in October, under less favourable circumstances than in June.

A meeting of the minority was subsequently held at which a statement, drafted by me, was accepted and issued for publication to the following effect :—

“ We, the undersigned, members of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, who opposed the decision arrived at by a majority of the Committee on Tuesday night, on the grounds that it was a violation of the basic principles which up to the present have carried the Volunteer movement to success, at the same time feel it our duty to continue our work in the movement ; and we appeal to those of the rank and file, who are in agreement with us on this point, to sink their personal feelings and persist in their efforts to make the Irish Volunteers an efficient armed force.

Eamonn Ceannt, M. J. Judge, Con O
Colbáird, John Fitzgibbon, Eamonn
Martin, P. H. Pearse, Seán Mac Diarmada,
Piaras Béaslaí.

Dublin, June 17th, 1914.”

The name of Liam Mellows was omitted from this statement in his own interest, as he was Secretary to the Provisional Committee. All the minority, except Messrs. Fitzgibbon and Judge, were members of the I.R.B.

Those of the Provisional Committee who had advocated the surrender to Mr. Redmond got something of a shock when the names of his nominees were made public. Mr. Redmond had stressed the "unrepresentative" nature of the Provisional Committee, but nearly half of his own nominees were Dublin men, only a few were men of high standing in the national life, and none of them were men who had shown any interest in the Volunteer Movement. They were chosen chiefly for their political subservience to Mr. Redmond, and their experience of political wire-pulling. One of them had achieved an unsavoury notoriety in squalid Dublin Municipal politics. Mr. Redmond's choice of nominees proved conclusively that he had no bona fide desire to forward the interests of the Volunteer Movement.

From the advent of the new nominees there was friction in the ruling body ; but the apparent external result of Mr. Redmond's official adoption of the Irish Volunteers was to give a fillip to the Volunteer organization. New companies were formed everywhere, but this progress was more apparent than actual. The increase in membership was a positive disadvantage. Hitherto the Volunteers had only attracted to their membership those who were genuinely interested in volunteering. Now the companies were flooded by elements of an undesirable and unreliable nature, a source rather of weakness than strength. This was proved in the first test—what was called the "baptism of fire"—which they received.

On Sunday, July 26th, 1914, occurred the

famous Howth gun-running—the first effort to arm the Volunteers. A body of about 800 Volunteers was marched out to Howth, seven miles from Dublin, only a few of those in charge being aware of the object of their march. They reached Howth simultaneously with the arrival in the harbour of a yacht laden with German Mauser rifles of the seventies—fine weapons which, under the name of “Howth rifles,” were to play an important part in the fighting of Easter Week, 1916. The rifles were landed and distributed among the men, but no ammunition was served out to them.

On the march back to Dublin the Volunteers were met at Clontarf by Mr. Harrel, the Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Police, with a body of about 200 policemen, and a company of soldiers of the Scottish Borderers, armed with rifles and bayonets. Mr. Harrel demanded the guns, and, his orders not being complied with, ordered the police to disarm the Volunteers. A scuffle ensued, in which a few Volunteers, policemen and soldiers were slightly injured, and about a dozen rifles were captured. Some of the police refused to obey their orders, and two of these were subsequently dismissed from the force.

If the original Volunteers only had been there to deal with the situation, it is probable that the men would have maintained discipline under the circumstances; but the “political element” which, since Mr. Redmond’s endorsement, had joined for parade purposes, threw the ranks into confusion, a number of them throwing away their rifles and taking to flight. Mr. Harrel then

called back his police, and commenced a fresh parley. Meanwhile the greater part of the Volunteers, having rifles, but no ammunition, took advantage of the delay to get away at the rear with their rifles, making their way across gardens and fields, with the result that Mr. Harrel's coup proved a fiasco as far as capturing the rifles was concerned. The whole episode was a rather ludicrous affair, in which neither side showed to much advantage.

But the sequel was a tragic one which profoundly moved Irish public opinion. The company of soldiers, under the charge of Major Haig, were returning to their barracks from Clontarf, when, in the neighbourhood of Bachelor's Walk, a small crowd jeered at and hooted them, and, it is alleged, threw stones at them. Major Haig ordered certain of his soldiers to "prepare to fire." The men took this as permission to fire, and fired indiscriminately at the crowd. As a result of the firing four persons were killed, and 37 wounded.

It would be difficult to describe the wave of horror and indignation that these occurrences sent through the country. The Irish people had beheld the Ulster Volunteers, under the instigation of some of the highest politicians and legal luminaries in England, openly organize, drill and arm to resist an Act of the British Parliament, conferring partial self-government on their fellow countrymen, without any interference by the English Government. When the Irish people themselves established Volunteers, however, the English Government immediately prohibited the

importation of arms into Ireland. The Ulster Volunteers, in open defiance of this prohibition, proceeded to land a cargo of rifles at Larne, holding up coastguardmen and police in the process, and to distribute them, without any action on the part of the English Government ; but, when the Irish Volunteers landed arms, the might of England was called in, and, in the result, unarmed Irish citizens were shot down in the streets of Dublin.

Those of us who were working in the interests of Irish independence regarded this storm of national indignation with satisfaction. It was long our conviction that the members of Mr. Asquith's Government were not sincere in their support of Home Rule, and would gladly wriggle out of their obligations to Mr. Redmond if they could ; and that Mr. Redmond was too weak and pliable in his dealings with them to take advantage of his position, and squeeze out a measure of self-government of national importance. Mr. Redmond's whole policy for years had been to preach an unlimited trust in the English Government, and discountenance any attempt to embarrass that Government. He had regarded the establishment and rise of the Volunteers with disfavour. The storm of protests, of horrified indignation, which the Howth incident and the shootings at Bachelor's Walk stirred up among the nation, was at its height, however, when—less than a week later—the outbreak of the great European War brought matters to a head.

There was a widespread feeling in Ireland that the outbreak of war gave Mr. Redmond a

magnificent opportunity for insisting on the immediate passing and enforcement of the Home Rule Bill. The course Mr. Redmond took was entirely different. Speaking in the House of Commons, without even consulting the members of his own party, he immediately pledged Ireland's unconditional support to England in the war, and threw the whole weight of his influence into the scale to promote the enlistment of his supporters in the British Army.

This new situation naturally increased the tension in the governing body of the Irish Volunteers. The majority of the Irish people, trained in an unquestioning obedience to their political leader, allowed themselves to be swept off their feet by a wave of pro-British enthusiasm, but there remained a substantial minority who refused to allow their attention to be diverted from Ireland. The view of these was well-voiced by Mr. Griffith in "Sinn Féin":—

"Ireland is not at war with Germany. She has no quarrel with any continental power. England is at war with Germany, and Mr. Redmond has offered England the services of the National Volunteers to defend Ireland. What has Ireland to defend, and whom has she to defend it against? Has she a native Constitution or a National Government to defend? All know that she has not. All know that both were wrested from her by the power to whom Mr. Redmond offers the services of National Ireland. All know that Mr. Redmond has made his offer without receiving a *quid pro quo*. There is no European Power waging war against the

people of Ireland. There are two European Powers at war with the people who dominate Ireland from Dublin Castle. The call to the Volunteers to 'defend Ireland' is a call to them to defend the bureaucracy entrenched in that edifice.

"Our duty is in no doubt. We are Irish Nationalists, and the only duty we can have is to stand for Ireland's interests, irrespective of the interests of England, or Germany, or any other foreign country. This week the British Government has passed measures through all stages—first reading, second reading, committee, third reading, and report—in the House of Commons in the space of six hours. Let it withdraw the present abortive Home Rule Bill, and pass in the same space of time a full measure of Home Rule, and Irishmen will have some reason to mobilise for the defence of their institutions. At present, they have none. In the alternative, let a Provisional Government be set up in Dublin by Mr. Redmond and Sir Edward Carson, and we shall give it allegiance. But the confidence trick has been too often played upon us to deceive us again.

"If the Irish Volunteers are to defend Ireland they must defend it for Ireland, under Ireland's flag, and under Irish officers. Otherwise they will only help to perpetuate the enslavement of their country."

On September 18th the Home Rule Bill was placed on the Statute Book of the English Parliament, with a clause suspending its operation

until after the end of the war, when it was to be subject to an amending Act, thus leaving it open to the followers of Carson to renew their threats of armed opposition at that time. The "Act" was destined never to come into force, but the deluded people, swept off their feet by the war fever fostered by corrupt politicians, followed their leaders' policy of blind trust in England's good faith, and fully deserved the betrayal that followed.

The real concern of those who had founded the Irish Volunteers was that they saw that body in danger of being deflected from its original purpose to one diametrically opposed to it; a body founded to fight for Ireland in Ireland was in danger of being converted into an instrument to fight England's battles abroad to the detriment of Irish interests.

To those who have risen to manhood since 1916, it is hard to conceive the state of Ireland at the time. Never was there a period when the conquest of Ireland by England seemed more complete. Men, women, and children everywhere wore warlike badges in which the Union Jack was prominent; the strains of "God Save the King" were mingled with those of "A Nation Once Again"; the papers teemed with glorification of the English Army and English people; all the political guides of the people preached that winning the war for England was the only thing that mattered.

In the Provisional Committee the situation became impossible, and it soon grew clear that a split was inevitable.

A weekly journal called "The Irish Volunteer," published at the office of the "Enniscorthy Echo," and edited by Mr. Laurence de Lacey, an active member of the I.R.B., had been recognised by the old Provisional Committee of the Volunteers as their official organ. The proofs of the editorial matter were always submitted to me for approval. On the outbreak of the European War Mr. de Lacey took the same attitude as Mr. Griffith, declaring that the war was no business of the Volunteers, whose sole concern was the safeguarding of Irish freedom. This attitude awoke the fury of the pro-English zealots of the Irish Party. At a meeting of the General Executive of the Volunteers, held in the City Hall, a resolution was proposed by Party nominees, and carried by a small majority, that all official recognition of "The Irish Volunteer" should cease.

In the course of a heated debate the Party nominees passed from fierce denunciations to physical violence. Mr. J. D. Nugent, General Secretary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, walked up to Mr. Pearse and interrupted him in the course of his speech by calling him a "liar" and a "contemptible cur." Pearse, under this provocation, raised his hand to strike Nugent, who sprang on him and knocked him down, and a scene of disorder followed. Other Party stalwarts rushed up and assailed the "Sinn Feiners" with their fists (but quite ineffectively), while others drew revolvers. One of these persons presented a pistol at Eamonn Ceannt, and declared he would "shoot him

like a dog." The notorious character already alluded to as having an unsavoury reputation in Dublin municipal politics, drew a revolver, and roared out a string of curses and obscene phrases. Attacked in this manner, we made no attempt to retaliate, merely acting on the defensive, and the hubbub subsided as quickly as it had arisen, leaving the "Sinn Feiners" cool and uninjured. It is painful to have to recount such squalid and discreditable incidents, but they serve to show the character of the opposition which we had to encounter in our efforts to save the Irish Volunteers for Ireland.

On September 25th a meeting was announced to be held in the Mansion House, at which Mr. Asquith and Mr. Redmond would speak in favour of recruiting. On the night before this a number of Volunteers, organized by the majority of the original Provisional Committee, executed a *coup d'état*, seizing the headquarters of the Irish Volunteers in Kildare Street, and declaring Mr. Redmond's nominees expelled from control of the Volunteers.

On the same night, a body of about eighty men, of whom the leading spirits were James Connolly, Seán MacDiarmada, and Tom Clarke, met in a hall in Rutland Square, with the intention of seizing the Mansion House, and preventing the holding of Asquith's meeting. I was one of those present. It was our intention to hold the place with rifles, and, if necessary, to fight to the last man. At the last moment it was reported that the Mansion House was already guarded by armed forces, and this, and certain

other miscarriages of plans, caused the enterprise to be abandoned. James Connolly, who was the leading spirit in this undertaking, was convinced of the necessity of a sacrifice of life in order to wake up the country, but the occasion selected for such a sacrifice was hardly worthy of it, and it is doubtful if the effect on the country would have been what he anticipated.

A manifesto was issued, signed by twenty members of the original Provisional Committee, in the following terms :—

“ Ten months ago a Provisional Committee commenced the Irish Volunteer movement with the sole purpose of securing and defending the rights and liberties of the Irish people. The movement on these lines, though thwarted and opposed for a time, obtained the support of the Irish Nation. When the Volunteer movement had become the main factor in the national position, Mr. Redmond decided to acknowledge it, and to endeavour to bring it under his control.

“ Three months ago he put forward the claim to send twenty-five nominees to the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers. He threatened, if the claim was not conceded, to proceed to the dismemberment of the Irish Volunteer organization.

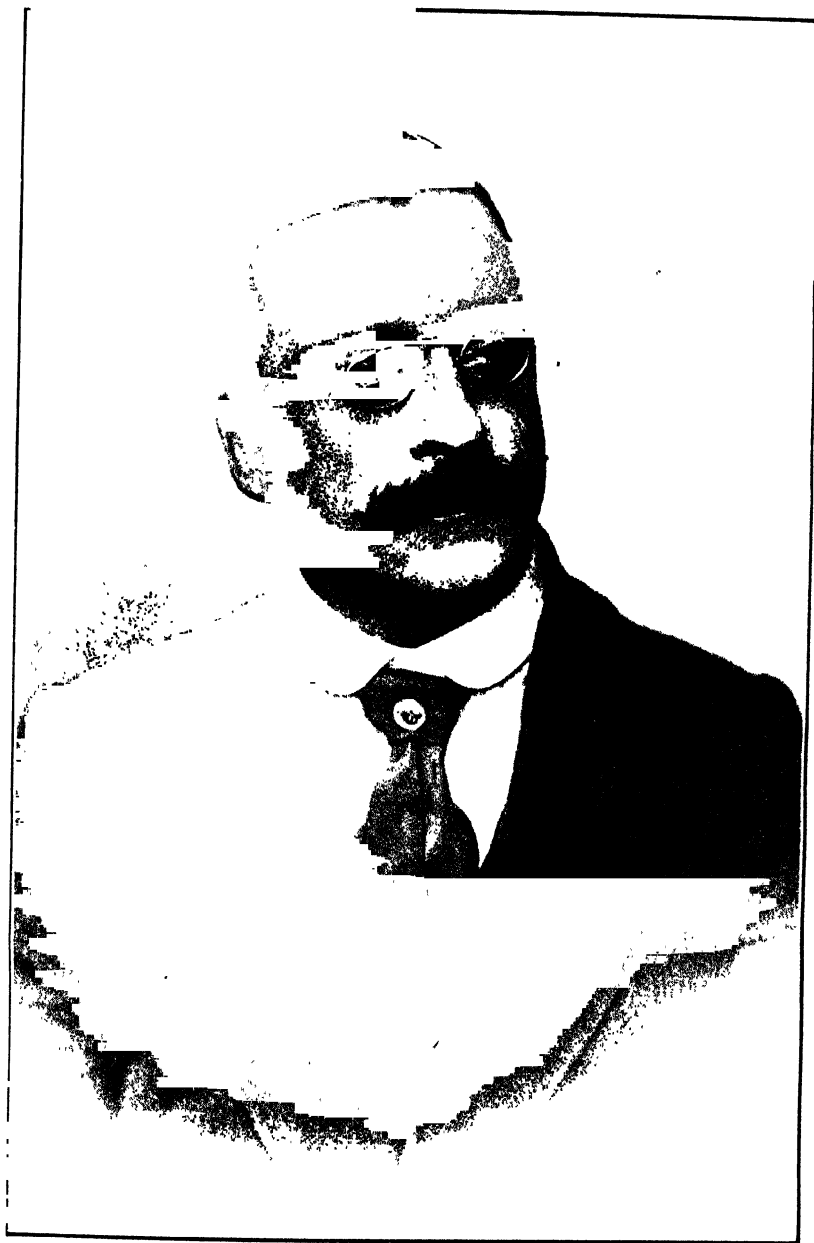
“ It is clear that this proposal to throw the country into turmoil, and to destroy the chances of a Home Rule measure in the near future, must have been forced upon Mr. Redmond. Already, ignoring the Irish Volunteers as a factor in the national position, Mr. Redmond had

consented to a dismemberment of Ireland which could be made permanent by the same agencies that forced him to accept it as temporary. He was now prepared to risk another disruption, and the wreck of the cause entrusted to him.

"The Provisional Committee, while recognising that the responsibility in that case would be altogether Mr. Redmond's, decided to risk the lesser evil, and to admit his nominees to sit and act on the Committee. The Committee made no representations as to the persons to be nominated, and, when the nominations were received, the Committee raised no question as to how far Mr. Redmond had fulfilled his public undertaking to nominate 'representative men from different parts of the country.' Mr. Redmond's nominees were admitted purely and simply as his nominees, and without co-option.

"Mr. Redmond, addressing a body of Irish Volunteers on last Sunday, has now announced for the Irish Volunteers a policy and programme fundamentally at variance with their own published and accepted aims and pledges, but with which his nominees are, of course, identified. He has declared it to be the duty of the Irish Volunteers to take foreign service under a Government which is not Irish. He has made this announcement without consulting the Provisional Committee, the Volunteers themselves, or the people of Ireland to whose service alone they are devoted.

"Having thus disregarded the Irish Volunteers and their solemn engagement, Mr. Redmond is no longer entitled, through his nominees, to any



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place in the administration and guidance of the Irish Volunteer organisation. Those who, by virtue of Mr. Redmond's nomination, have heretofore been admitted to act on the Provisional Committee, accordingly cease henceforth to belong to that body, and from this date until the holding of an Irish Volunteer Convention, the Provisional Committee consists of those only whom it comprised before the admission of Mr. Redmond's nominees.

"At the next meeting of the Provisional Committee we shall propose:—

"1. To call a Convention of Irish Volunteers for Wednesday, 25th November, 1914, the anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers in Dublin.

"2. To re-affirm without qualification the manifesto proposed and adopted at the inaugural meeting.

"3. To oppose any diminution of the measure of Irish self-government which now exists as a Statute on paper, and which would not now have reached that stage but for the Irish Volunteers.

"4. To repudiate any undertaking, by whomsoever given, to consent to the legislative dismemberment of Ireland; and to protest against the attitude of the present Government, who, under the pretence that 'Ulster cannot be coerced,' avow themselves prepared to coerce the Nationalists of Ulster.

"5. To declare that Ireland cannot, with honour or safety, take part in foreign quarrels

otherwise than through the free action of a National Government of her own; and to repudiate the claim of any man to offer up the blood and lives of the sons of Irishmen and Irishwomen to the service of the British Empire, while no National Government, which could speak and act for the people of Ireland, is allowed to exist.

“6. To demand that the present system of governing Ireland through Dublin Castle and the British military power, a system responsible for the recent outrages in Dublin, be abolished without delay, and that a National Government be forthwith established in its place.

“The signatories to this statement are the great majority of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, apart from the nominees of Mr. Redmond, who are no longer members of the Committee. We regret that the absence of Sir Roger Casement in America prevents him from being a signatory with us.

“EOIN MACNEILL,
Chairman, Provisional Committee.
UA RATHGHAILLE,
Treasurer, Provisional Committee.
THOMAS MACDONAGH.
JOSEPH PLUNKETT.
PIARAS BEASLAI.
MICHAEL J. JUDGE.
PETER PAUL MACKEN, Ex-Alderman.
SEAN MACGIOBUIN.
P. H. PEARSE.

PADRAIC O RIAIN.
BULMER HOBSON.
EAMONN MARTIN.
CÓNCHUBHAIR O COLBAIRD.
EAMONN CEANNT.
SEAN MACDIARMUDA.
SEAMUS O CONCHUBHAIR.
LIAM MELLOWES.
L. COLM O LOCHLAINN.
LIAM UA COGAN.
PETER WHITE."

This manifesto was received by the organs of the Irish Parliamentary Party with angry derision. The "*Freeman's Journal*," the official organ of the Parliamentary Party, headed its editorial comments on it—"Mr. MacNeill's Impudence"—a good illustration of the official attitude of mind engendered by the Party's long régime of unquestioned despotism. Every device was resorted to in order to discredit those who remained loyal to the old national faith. Insinuations were made against their personal honour; it was alleged that the trouble was over "inquiries into the allocation of funds," instituted by Mr. Redmond's followers; it was roundly asserted that the old Provisional Committee were all "pro-Germans," and were "bribed by German gold."

Of course a split in the ranks of the Volunteers was inevitable. The majority of the Volunteers as then constituted, being followers of Mr. Redmond, seceded and formed a rival organization called the "*National Volunteers*." The loss was not

a very serious one, as only a very small number of these were really in earnest about volunteering, as was proved by the result. Under the aegis of the Parliamentary Party the "National Volunteers" had large funds to draw on; offices were obtained, paid officials appointed, and a big weekly organ established to voice their views, whose columns teemed with abuse of the Provisional Committee and their followers. But the "National Volunteers" rapidly became a moribund body. Lacking any sincere convictions or clear purpose, following the leadership of those who said their place was not in Ireland but in France, they melted away from a paper strength of 170,000 to a few hundred. It was the policy of their political leaders to keep them inactive. Their last public appearance was in April, 1915, when a "grand national review" in Dublin resulted in a muster of some 18,000 men, of whom only a small number were armed. By 1916 they had practically ceased to exist. The small nucleus that remained, headed by Colonel Moore, broke away from Mr. Redmond in 1917, and came over to the side of Ireland.

The Irish Volunteers who remained loyal to the original constitution of their body were, of course, greatly reduced in numbers, but they made up in energy, enthusiasm and steadfastness for what they lacked in strength. A Convention at which delegates from every loyal Volunteer Company in Ireland attended, was held in the Abbey Theatre late in 1914. This Convention insisted upon electing the old Provisional Committee as the Executive of the organization.

They adopted the following declaration of policy :—

“(1) To maintain the right and duty of the Irish nation henceforth to provide for its own defence by means of a permanent armed and trained Volunteer force.

(2) To unite the people of Ireland on the basis of Irish nationality and a common national interest ; to maintain the integrity of the nation ; and to resist with all our strength any measures tending to bring about or perpetuate disunion or the partition of our country.

(3) To resist any attempt to force the men of Ireland into military service under any Government until the free National Government of Ireland is empowered by the Irish people themselves to deal with it.

(4) To secure the abolition of the system of governing Ireland through Dublin Castle and the British Military power, and the establishment of a National Government in its place.”

At the time of the split the paper strength of the Irish Volunteers was close on 200,000, and of these only about 12,000 followed the lead of the Provisional Committee ; but their numbers increased slowly but steadily, while the numbers of the Redmondite Volunteers crumbled away with almost startling rapidity. Drilling, arming and organizing went on continuously, new recruits trickled in gradually, while practically none of those who remained loyal at

the time of the split fell away subsequently. Up to Easter Week, 1916, however, the Irish Volunteers could only claim the support of a decided minority of the Irish people. Their numbers in all Ireland at the time of the Insurrection of 1916 did not total 18,000, and only a very small minority of those outside Dublin possessed arms and ammunition.

The London Company of Volunteers, of which Michael Collins was a member, had only been a few weeks in existence when the split came. Collins championed the cause of the old Provisional Committee, and was largely instrumental in inducing the majority to remain loyal. This small body of exiled Irishmen included a number who were destined to play an important part in subsequent events. The majority of them were later participators in the Easter Week Insurrection.

CHAPTER IV.

The Coming Rising

THE outbreak of the great European War, in which England was engaged, seemed to give the Irish Republican Brotherhood the opportunity for which it had been waiting for many years. Many Separatists had deplored the fact that there had been no insurrection in Ireland in 1899, when England's hands were full with the Boer War. It was felt that, however hopeless such an attempt might seem from the military point of view, a "protest in arms" against the English occupation was necessary, if the cause of Separatism was not to be abandoned in despair. It was pointed out that we were the only generation of Irishmen for 120 years who had not protested against British rule with arms in our own hands. The logic of our position pointed inevitably to an insurrection, and to an attempt to secure assistance from the enemies of England. The Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood decided, immediately on the outbreak of the War, on an attempt to free Ireland by force of arms; the armed body of Volunteers provided an instrument ready to their hands; steps were taken to get in touch with the Germans with a view to securing arms; and

the plans for the Insurrection of Easter Week, 1916, had taken definite shape before the end of 1914. In proof of this I may mention that Ned Daly and I, as Commandant and Vice-Commandant of the first Battalion, had our positions allotted to us, and had started preparing plans of our operations as early as December, 1914.

There never was any idea of inviting or agreeing to a German landing in Ireland. We asked the Germans only for arms and the assistance of a few military instructors.

A man not at this time connected with the I.R.B., James Connolly, the leader of the Irish Labour Movement, was equally convinced of the necessity of a "blood sacrifice" to save the national ideal, which seemed in danger of dissolution. Connolly was an internationalist and socialist, who was also a fervent patriot; and he was determined, if he could only get twenty men to follow him, to make the necessary "armed protest," and, if necessary, the supreme sacrifice. I have already described the plot to seize the Mansion House on the occasion of Mr. Asquith's recruiting meeting, and to hold it to the death, to which he induced the heads of the I.R.B. to consent. Although I was one of those who agreed to make the attempt, I was sincerely glad when the project was abandoned, and have never ceased to look back upon that abandonment with thankfulness. But the desperate nature of the undertaking shows the relentless determination of Connolly.

The Labour Organization had established a separate Volunteer body under the name of the "Citizen Army." These men, though in sympathy with our aims, and working in unison with us, remained an independent body under separate control. They were confined to Dublin and were only a little over two hundred. There was another body of Volunteers called the "Hibernian Rifles," members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Irish-American Alliance), a distinct body from the Board of Erin Hibernians, who also worked in unison with the Irish Volunteers.

Our plot of insurrection was, of course, not known to those members of the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers, who did not belong to the I.R.B., not even to some of those who did. In particular, Bulmer Hobson, General Secretary of the Volunteers, who was known to be strongly opposed to any such attempt, was kept in complete ignorance of our plans, though he was aware that a rising was contemplated. In fact out of the twenty members of the Provisional Committee, only three or four were in the secret until a later period.

The United States of America were then neutral in the War; and it was through the Clan-na-Gael that communication was obtained with Germany, by means of the German Ambassador. Sean T. O Ceallaigh and Dr. Pat MacCartan went to the United States in connection with this matter early in 1915. A regular system of communication with John Devoy, the veteran Fenian, editor of the

"Gaelic American," was established through Tommy O'Connor, a steward on an Atlantic liner, whose brother John was an active member of "F" Company, 1st Battalion of the Dublin Brigade.

Sir Roger Casement made his way to Germany, narrowly escaping assassination by British agents, and endeavoured to recruit an "Irish Brigade" from Irish prisoners of war in Germany. The attempt met with very moderate success. Casement was later joined by Robert Monteith, an officer of the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers, who had formerly served in the British Army.

I have thought it necessary to dwell on these secret preparations for insurrection, as it is the part of the story of which least is known; but it should be remembered that the vast bulk of the Volunteers, and of those associated with us in resisting the pro-British campaign and the recruiting policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party, were in complete ignorance of these preparations; and many of the latter would have been completely opposed to such an attempt had they known of it. Arthur Griffith was one of these.

There exists a curious idea in England to this day that Mr. Asquith and Mr. Birrell were in some mysterious way responsible by their "tolerance" of the Irish Volunteers for the Insurrection of Easter Week. As one who was working tooth and nail to bring about an insurrection, I can testify that the biggest obstacle that we had to contend against was

the cleverness of Birrell's policy. The one thing that would have rallied support to our side was drastic coercion on the part of the English Government; but Mr. Birrell cleverly contrived to appear as not interfering with us, while taking care that we were effectually silenced. The Editors of anti-English papers and pamphlets were not proceeded against; the papers were not officially suppressed; but, under the Defence of the Realm Act, the printers who produced them were liable to be closed down; the result being that no printers in Dublin, with the honourable exceptions of Mr. Patrick Mahon, of Yarnhall Street, and Mr. Joseph Stanley, of the Gaelic Press, would take the risk of printing our publications, and both firms were ultimately closed down by military action.

Those who were united in standing for Irish interests against English interests, who tried to prevent the Irish people from being carried off their feet by the bellicose oratory of the Irish Parliamentary Party, had to contend not merely against the English Government, but all the most powerful influences in the country—politicians, Press, and, to a considerable extent, the clergy. Our position was misrepresented; we were labelled "pro-Germans"; it was commonly asserted that we were "paid by German Gold." It can be stated here that all the work of the Insurrection was financed by the Clan-na-Gael and I.R.B., and that no money was received or sought by us for any branch of the work from any save an Irish source.

To counteract this propaganda it was decided,

at the time of the Volunteer split, to start a daily paper. This paper was brought into being by voluntary subscriptions of sympathisers. Arthur Griffith was the editor, and I was a member of the staff. We started on a capital of less than £150, and Griffith derived intense amusement from this fact, recalling the time when people thought him mad to start a Sinn Fein daily on a capital of about £2,000. The first issue appeared on October 26th, 1914. Most of the work was done by Griffith, and the little four-page daily soon began to exert a considerable influence on public opinion. It was allowed to continue until December, when Mr. Birrell suppressed it by his favourite contemptible device of striking at the printers. At the same time the I.R.B. monthly, "Irish Freedom," and Arthur Griffith's own weekly, "Sinn Fein," were suppressed by similar methods.

Griffith now conceived the idea of a bi-weekly under the title of "Scissors and Paste," which should consist conclusively of extracts from other newspapers. It was felt that the English Government could hardly proceed against a printer for publishing matter which had been already allowed to appear in other periodicals. The cuttings were so ingeniously selected and arranged as to constitute useful propaganda. Even this new journal was not allowed to last more than two months. At the end of February Mr. Mahon's printing machinery was dismantled by British military, and it was impossible to get the journal printed in Dublin. By the same act, the printing of the "Irish Volunteer,"

edited by Eoin MacNeill, was brought to a standstill; but the brilliant idea was conceived of getting it printed by an Orange firm in Belfast. Of course the English Government did not dare to interfere with *them*. A couple of months later, with the assistance of Seán MacDiarmuda and Tom Clarke, a new weekly journal, "Nationality," edited by Arthur Griffith, appeared. This journal, being also printed in Belfast, was able to continue in existence up to Easter Week 1916.

"The Irish Worker," the organ of the Transport Workers' Union, was suppressed in December, 1914, but in June, 1915, a new organ, "The Worker's Republic," was produced by James Connolly, and exerted a powerful influence among Dublin workers. For some reason this paper was not interfered with by the English. There were, in addition, several small weekly sheets, such as "The Spark," and "Honesty," which helped to spread our propaganda, and a number of pamphlets by Pearse, O'Rahilly, and others was also issued. There was also "The Hibernian," the organ of the Ancient Order of Hibernians which was affiliated with the organization of the same name in America. All these publications, which raised a voice for the cause of Irish independence in a land deafened with the hysterical screechings of war-mad politicians and the bleatings of their sheep-like followers, deserve honourable mention.

The slow and steady progress of the Irish Volunteers, and the persistence of the small and patriotic minority in Ireland in resisting the

combined forces of the English Government and the Irish Parliamentary Party, began to cause the rulers of Ireland uneasiness. Irish members of Parliament and their supporters, and practically the entire Irish Press, were devoting their energies to an effort to stampede all able-bodied young Irishmen into joining the English Army, and were meeting with considerable success, but the Irish Volunteers remained an obstacle to this consummation, so devoutly wished by the English Government, and all enemies of Ireland. Mr. Birrell, so astutely benevolent, was forced to resort to coercion. Arrests and imprisonments of leading Volunteers, and of those who spoke in support of them, grew more and more frequent.

Sean O'Hegarty, a leading Cork Volunteer, was ordered by the military authorities to leave Cork. Subsequently he was arrested at the house of Laurence De Lacey, in Enniscorthy, and tried at Green Street Courthouse, Dublin, on the charge of having explosives in his possession. A Dublin jury found him "not guilty" in face of the clearest evidence, which we regarded at the time as a great triumph. De Lacey, the real owner of the explosives, escaped, and was smuggled away to America. Alec McCabe, of Sligo, arrested on a similar charge to O'Hegarty's, was also acquitted in the face of all evidence by a Dublin jury. This was the last trial by jury for a political offence ever held under the British régime outside Ulster. Henceforth the British relied upon their paid magistrates, and later on court martials.

Sean MacDiarmuda was sentenced to two months imprisonment for a speech delivered in the West, and Sean Milroy to a similar penalty for a similar offence. Alf Monahan, a Volunteer organiser, was ordered to leave Cavan, and when he refused was imprisoned. There were many other such cases.

All this time, owing to the misrepresentations of Parliamentary politicians and their Press, the Volunteers remained unpopular with the majority of the people, and incurred the odium of the ignorant. A parade of Dublin Volunteers in Limerick on Whit Monday, 1915, was attacked by a howling mob. In other places Volunteers were hooted, jeered at, called "pro-Germans." However, the persecutions of the English authorities helped to bring a certain amount of sympathy to their side.

In August, 1915, Liam Mellows, Ernest Blythe, Denis MacCullough and a Mr. Pim, were ordered by the military authorities to leave Ireland. They refused, and were sentenced to four months imprisonment. This "deportation order" caused great indignation even among persons not in sympathy with them.

In short the astute Mr. Birrell was being forced by the pressure of the extremists of Dublin Castle into the one policy that could help us—persecution and coercion. Even in an Ireland dominated by our political enemies, who flooded the public ear with calumnies, the spectacle of this persecution of Irish Volunteers by the English Government had its effect. Our strength grew slowly, but still we remained a decided

minority of the Irish people, generally misrepresented and misunderstood.

In August, 1915, an event occurred which greatly helped the advocates of the old Separatist ideal. O'Donovan Rossa, the veteran Fenian Leader, died in America at an advanced age, and it was decided by the Clan-na-Gael and I.R.B. to bring the remains to Ireland, and inter them in Glasnevin Cemetery, after a public military funeral.

The name of O'Donovan Rossa had been one to conjure with in Ireland. He represented all that was splendid and heroic in the Fenian tradition. A Gaelic speaker from the same district as Michael Collins, a man of lofty stature, fine physique and imposing presence, he had spent his life in untiring efforts for Irish independence, and had endured for many years the inhuman cruelties of penal servitude in an English convict prison with dauntless resistance and unbroken spirit. He had become a legendary figure in Irish history, and, even those who were now trying to persuade the Irish people that it was their duty to fight and die for the Power that O'Donovan Rossa had fought against, did not dare to say a word against him. They contented themselves with maligning those who tried in our time to do what O'Donovan Rossa did in his time. Even the supporters of Mr. Redmond felt themselves compelled to join in the national tribute to a dead patriot, and troop in at the heels of the I.R.B. and the Irish Volunteers. The funeral, at which contingents from public bodies and organisations all over

the country attended, was of imposing dimensions, and the military bearing and precision and business-like arrangements of the Volunteers made a powerful impression on the public. Beside the grave Patrick Pearse delivered an oration, which has become historical. Speaking first in the native tongue of O'Donovan Rossa, and afterwards in English, he said:—

DO NIARRAÐ ORM-SA LABAIRT INDIU AR SON A
bhuil cruinnighe ar an láthair so agus ar son
a bhuil beo de Clannaið Saedéal, as molað
an leomhain do leasamar i socré annso agus as
sriosað meánman na scharað atá so brónaé ina
díaíð.

A cáirde, ná bíod brón ar éinne atá ina
seasamh as an uais seo, áct bíod buídeacas asainn
inár sroiðtíð do Dia na ngrás do cruthais
anam uasal áluinn Diarmuid Uí Donnabáin Rosa
agus tug ré fáda dó ar an saogal so.

Da calma an fear tu, a Diarmuid. Is créan
o'fearais cat ar son cirt do cine, is ní beas
ar fuilings; agus ní déanfaíð Saedil
dearmad ort so bráé na breite.

Áct, a cáirde, ná bíod brón orainn, áct
bíod misneac inár sroiðtíð agus bíod nearc
inár scuisleannaíð, óir cuimnísimís nac mbíonn
aon bás ann nac mboínn aiséirge ina diaíð,
agus surab as an uais seo agus as na huasannaíð
atá inár dtimceall éireocás saoirse Saedéal.

"It has seemed right, before we turn away from this place in which we have laid the mortal remains of O'Donovan Rossa, that one among us should, in the name of all, speak the praise of that valiant man, and endeavour to formulate the thought and the hope that are in us as we stand around the grave. And if there is anything that makes it fitting that I, rather than some other, I, rather than one of the grey-haired men who were young with him and shared in his labour and in his suffering, should speak here, it is perhaps that I may be taken as speaking on behalf of a new generation that has been re-baptised in the Fenian faith, and that has accepted responsibility of carrying out the Fenian programme. I propose to you then that, here by the grave of this unrepentant Fenian, we renew our baptismal vows; that, here by the grave of this unconquered and unconquerable man, we ask of God, each one for himself, such unshakable purpose, such high and gallant courage, such unbreakable strength of soul as belonged to O'Donovan Rossa.

"Deliberately here we now avow ourselves, as he avowed himself in the dock, Irishmen of one allegiance only. We of the Irish Volunteers, and you others who are associated with us in to-day's task and duty, are bound together and must stand together henceforth in brotherly union for the achievement of the freedom of Ireland. And we know only one definition of freedom: it is Tone's definition, it is Mitchel's definition, it is Rossa's definition. Let no man blaspheme the cause that the dead generations

of Ireland served by giving it any other name and definition than their name and their definition.

"We stand at Rossa's grave not in sadness, but rather in exaltation of spirit that it has been given to us to come thus into so close a communion with that brave and splendid Gael. Splendid and holy causes are served by men who are themselves splendid and holy. O'Donovan Rossa was splendid in the proud manhood of him, splendid in the heroic grace of him, splendid in the Gaelic strength and clarity and truth of him. And all that splendour and pride and strength was compatible with a humility and a simplicity of devotion to Ireland, to all that was olden and beautiful and Gaelic in Ireland, the holiness and simplicity of patriotism of a Michael O'Clery or of an Eoghan O'Growney. The clear true eyes of this man almost alone in his day visioned Ireland as we of to-day would surely have her: not free merely, but Gaelic as well; not Gaelic merely, but free as well.

"In a closer spiritual communion with him now than ever before or perhaps ever again, in a spiritual communion with those of his day, living and dead, who suffered with him in English prisons, in communion of spirit too with our own dear comrades who suffer in English prisons to-day, and speaking on their behalf as well as our own, we pledge to Ireland our love, and we pledge to English rule in Ireland our hate. This is a place of peace, sacred to the dead, where men should speak with all charity and with all restraint; but I hold it a Christian thing, as

O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression, and, hating them, to strive to overthrow them. Our foes are strong and wise and wary; but, strong and wise and wary as they are, they cannot undo the miracles of God who ripens in the hearts of young men the seeds sown by the young men of a former generation. And the seeds sown by the young men of '65 and '67 are coming to their miraculous ripening to-day. Rulers and Defenders of Realms had need to be wary if they would guard against such processes. Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools!—they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace."

Few among those who heard him realised all that was behind these words.

Situated in a London brimming with war fever, the Irish Volunteers who remained loyal to the Provisional Committee deemed it expedient to meet and drill in secret. They were a small body of young men, but thoroughly in earnest and devoted to the cause of Irish freedom. They knew nothing of the projected rising (which, as

I say, had been decided on by the I.R.B., almost immediately after the outbreak of war), but there was a general feeling among those known as "extremists" that, if this war were allowed to go without an effort to assert the claims of Ireland by force, all hope of Irish freedom was gone for ever. Without knowing anything definite, those who were in earnest about the matter "sensed" something of the kind in the air.

It was realised by this time that compulsory military service was inevitable in England; and these young men had no intention of being forced into the military service of the oppressor of their country. They were fully determined, if conscription was introduced, to return to Ireland and assist their fellow-Volunteers in resisting its application to their own country.

It was at this time that Collins was on the point of taking a step which would have altered the current of his whole life. A few years previously he had considered proposals to emigrate to the United States, which seemed to offer a wider field for his energies and talents than England or Ireland, but he decided against the project. The prospect of Conscription in England again brought his plan to the front. His sister writes:—"At the end of 1915, urged by Pat, his brother in Chicago, he seriously contemplated leaving for America, as he foresaw that conscription was forthcoming, and he had no intention of wasting his life in prison as a 'conscientious objector,' and he considered that by emigrating he might best be able to serve

his own country. For this was always in his mind—to serve Ireland, and help to put her in her rightful place among the nations of the earth. We discussed the idea of emigration in its various bearings for several evenings. I was strongly in favour of it, but about the 23rd December he said—‘There is going to be trouble in Ireland in the spring, and I could not endure the thought of not being there and in it.’ That settled it, as I made no attempt to go against his convictions, and he left London about 15th January, 1916.”

The fact was that Collins, like other members of the I.R.B., had received a summons from Seán MacDiarmuda to return to Ireland.

Michael Collins secured his release from his employment by telling his manager that he wished to go to Dublin to “join up” in an Irish regiment. This perfectly true statement was interpreted as meaning that he meant to join the British Army. His manager warmly congratulated him on his decision, allowed him to leave immediately, paying him an extra month’s salary to enable him to “take a holiday before he went away.” Collins succeeded in changing the cheque for gold in the Bank of England, and, on his arrival in Dublin, handed the gold over to Sean MacDiarmuda, who, at this time, was engaged in laying aside a “gold reserve” with a view to the coming Insurrection. Some years later Collins, as Minister of Finance, was himself engaged in a similar effort to hoard up gold.

The story of his leaving his London

employment, like many humorous stories, has been exaggerated and distorted in the re-telling. It is said that a presentation of a gold watch and a purse of sovereigns was made to him by his colleagues, and yet again that "his employers" (who, by the way, were an American firm) presented him with a cheque for a large amount in recognition of his loyalty to the Empire. The true facts are as I have narrated.

CHAPTER V.

Easter Week 1916

IN January, 1916, therefore, in his twenty-sixth year, Michael Collins arrived in Dublin to take his part in the "trouble" which was anticipated. He was already well and favourably known to Sean MacDiarmuda and other I.R.B. leaders in Dublin, and some former associates of his in London were now domiciled in the Irish capital. One of these latter, Mr. Patrick Belton, of Belfield Park, Drumcondra, received him as a guest on arrival, along with other Irish Volunteers from London, and later he went to stay with an aunt of his, Mrs. Donovan, at Inchicore. The branches of the Gaelic League, and I.R.B. and Volunteer gatherings, offered him social circles in which he met old friends and made new ones. He found himself at home and in a friendly atmosphere from the time of his arrival in Dublin. Many of his I.R.B. and Volunteer comrades from London arrived in Dublin at the same time.

Immediately on his arrival Collins started to look for a job, and after some time secured a position with the well-known firm of chartered accountants, Craig, Gardner and Co., of Dame Street. This post he held until shortly before

the Rising, when Joseph Plunkett, who had formed a high opinion of him, made him his aide-de-camp.

Collins was now liable to arrest on the charge of evading military service in the English Army. It was his first experience of being "on the run," as it was called ; he was destined to spend the greater part of his remaining life "on the run." He changed his residence more than once, finally taking lodgings at Rathdown Road.

A large number of Volunteers from London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and other centres in England and Scotland, arrived in Dublin at the same time. They had come to Ireland not to evade military service through any personal fear, but because they regarded it as the basest of treachery to their country to serve in the Army of Ireland's oppressors. Instead of occupying the less dangerous position of "conscientious objectors" in England, they elected to join their fellow Volunteers in Ireland in armed resistance. As proof of the faith that was in them they founded a camp at Kimmage, near Dublin, where they lived under military conditions, with sentries always on duty, showing their determination to resist with arms any attempt to raid their stronghold. These men were known jocosely as "the refugees," a name which they resented. They played a very noteworthy part in the fighting of Easter Week ; and one of them, Frank Thornton, who had been Captain of the Liverpool Volunteers, will figure later in this narrative as one of Collins's principal Intelligence Officers.

Although Collins did not reside at Kimmage, he visited the camp almost every day, and was regarded as a member of the unit.

Almost from his arrival in Dublin, Michael Collins became a regular visitor to the rooms of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League, then situated at 18 North Frederick Street. It was here I first met him; and it was here that he first made the acquaintance of a number of men who were destined to play a notable part in the events of his subsequent career.

I have already referred to Sean MacDiarmuda, the I.R.B. leader, who made the acquaintance of Collins some years before, when on a visit to London. Sean MacDiarmuda had formed a high opinion of Collins, and the younger man had conceived an ardent and affectionate admiration for Sean, who was, indeed, one of the most amiable and best-beloved of men. Probably the fact that Sean MacDiarmuda was at this time associated with the Keating Branch was one of the reasons that attracted Collins thither.

I was the intimate and constant companion of Sean MacDiarmuda for several years before his death, and was associated with him in his work on "Irish Freedom" and on the Executive of the Volunteers, and I think it important to record the great qualities and precious services in the cause of Ireland of this remarkable man. He was at this time in his thirtieth year. His whole manhood had been spent in work for his country, in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, in Sinn Fein, and in the Irish Ireland movement

generally. At an early age he began to carry weight in the counsels of the Separatist Party. His ardour, energy, and unselfish devotion were joined to a practical common sense, and a wonderful knowledge and tact in dealing with other men which made him generally popular, even with his political opponents. He had become a close personal friend of Tom Clarke, the veteran Fenian who, after spending sixteen years in English convict prisons, came out of jail, in Collins's words, "to take up the work where he had left it off." Another old Fenian, John Daly of Limerick, whom long years of penal servitude had made a physical wreck of without abating his courage or patriotic ardour, was also an intimate friend of Sean MacDiarmuda. Sean travelled through Ireland organizing the I.R.B., and when "Irish Freedom" was founded he became its manager. When the split in the I.R.B. organization arose, Sean MacDiarmuda was prostrated by illness, brought on largely by his exertions in the National cause. He had been a fine, active, athletic young man; he rose from his sick bed a cripple, partially paralysed on one side, but only to throw himself into the work with the same enthusiasm as ever. Another man would have been depressed by his physical disability, but Sean remained the cheeriest of mortals. He adhered to the party of Tom Clarke, who continued in control of the organization; and he became a leading spirit in the now more progressive policy of the Separatists. He took an active part in the establishment of the Volunteers, became a member of the Provisional

Committee, and later of the elected Executive, and from the first was actively concerned in the plans for an insurrection. Indeed it may be said that Sean MacDiarmuda and Tom Clarke were more responsible than any other two men for the Rising of Easter Week.

Sean MacDiarmuda was a dark-haired, handsome young man, with a winning smile, and attractive manners. He was exceedingly sociable, possessed of an intense sense of humour, a gaiety which neither his physical sufferings, nor the doubts, difficulties, and dangers of his work could quench. He exercised a remarkable fascination on those with whom he came in contact, and attracted to himself a following of young men, devotedly attached to him, and ready to risk all, or suffer all, in accomplishing any work he gave them to do. In this respect Collins in later days often reminded me of him. The impression made by him on Collins is shown by the following tribute, written by Collins in 1922 :

“ Sean MacDiarmuda, tramping through Ireland, preached the Fenian gospel of a freedom which must be fought for, enrolled recruits, and by his pure patriotism and lovable unselfish character, inspired all with whom he came in contact to emulate him and be worthy of his teaching.”

At the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League Michael Collins met several young men who, later were closely associated with him in his

work, and played an important part in the events of succeeding years. Among them were Fionán Lynch, now Minister of Fisheries in the Free State; Gearóid O'Sullivan, who later became Adjutant General of the Irish Volunteers; Diarmuid O'Hegarty, later Director of Organization of the Volunteers, and Secretary of Dail Eireann, now Secretary to the Free State Ministry; and Con Collins, then a particular chum of Sean MacDiarmuda, later a member of Dail Eireann. He also renewed his acquaintance with Colm O Murchadha, whom he had known in London; Colm is now Secretary to Dail Eireann.

Another member of the Branch who was destined to achieve fame was Dick Mulcahy, afterwards Chief of Staff of the Irish Volunteers; but Collins did not become familiar with him at this time. Besides these younger and still unknown men, there was a man whose name was already well known in Irish Ireland and Separatist circles whom Collins met now for the first time—Cathal Brugha, President of the Keating Branch. At this time Cathal knew nothing of Michael Collins, and took no interest in him. Collins was only one of a hundred other young men belonging to the Branch. When, at a later date, they got to know one another better, Collins conceived a very high regard for Cathal Brugha; while the rise of Collins to fame and power seemed to evoke strange resentment on the part of the older man, which ultimately developed into bitter hostility, a hostility which was one of the factors in the

tragedy with which the history concludes, involving the violent death of both men.

Cathal Brugha was a native of Dublin, a commercial traveller, educated, well-bred, courteous, kindly, a man of the highest character, ardently patriotic and devoted to the cause of Ireland. Of small stature, but powerfully built, he had been in his earlier manhood a notable gymnast, boxer, and swimmer. Later he devoted his attention to the study of the Irish language, and though a native of Dublin, became a master of Munster Irish, which he spoke with unexceptionable correctness of idiom and pronunciation. Originally known as "Charlie Burgess," he changed his name to the Gaelic form of Cathal Brugha. He was also an ardent supporter of the Gaelic Athletic Association and of the Sinn Fein movement, and he was a very active worker in the Irish Republican Brotherhood. It was he who first initiated me into the I.R.B., and I was an intimate friend and associate of his for years. After Easter Week, as will be shown, he left the I.R.B., and, from being an ardent supporter, became a bitter enemy of that organization. At this time he was approaching his fortieth year, and had become a director of the firm of Lalor, Limited, church candle makers, of 14 Ormond Quay. In earlier years he had been very sociable, but at this time led a rather retired life.

Cathal Brugha was a man of kindest nature, a sincere friend, gentle in manner, but, as he was later to prove, as firm as steel, and as brave as a lion. He was a devout Catholic, and a man

whose life was guided by lofty principles. His chief defect was on the intellectual side. He was peculiarly inaccessible to new ideas outside a narrow and rigid list of formulas which he had prescribed for himself. His leonine courage was accompanied by an almost taurine obstinacy. I was his close friend and associate for years, and working with him for a common object in the Gaelic League, the I.R.B., and the Volunteers; but in details of policy I felt his judgment continually at fault to an extent which I could only call sheer wrong-headedness. On every issue he made up his mind on a small number of data, and crystallised them into a formula, and all subsequent attempts to put before him fresh data or considerations he had ignored were only waste of time. To such a mind it was natural to misunderstand its own mental processes, to mistake formulas for reasoning and prejudices for principles, to elevate personal animosity to the dignity of a moral passion, and pursue a vendetta in the spirit of a fight for truth and justice. To this trait only can be attributed the fact that so good and high-minded a man, having once conceived a prejudice against Collins, based, as will be seen, on trivial grounds, not very creditable to himself—the newspaper notoriety which Collins found thrust on him—pursued with such extraordinary bitterness a vendetta against a man so generous and unselfish as Collins, who never spoke an unkind word of him.

However, at this period it is doubtful if Brugha even knew Collins by name, although

they met at the Keating Branch and Volunteer parades. Brugha from his position and reputation was well known to Collins. He was Vice-Commandant of the Fourth Battalion of the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers.

Other prominent I.R.B. men with whom Collins was intimate were Tom Clarke, Diarmuid Lynch, Sean MacGarry, and Tom Ashe, Commandant of the Fifth (North County Dublin) Battalion.

When I try to recall my first meeting with Collins, the principal thing that strikes me is how rapidly and completely I found myself on terms of the greatest intimacy with him. He was at the time slim and equally boyish in appearance and manner, hardly looking his 25 years. I was first impressed by his frank friendliness, his infectious gaiety and rollicking high spirits. He held at the moment no position of authority, his manner was free from pretentiousness, and no occasion had arisen to call forth a display of his extraordinary qualities of intellect and character. But even at this stage he displayed his genius for making friends, and attaching men to himself by the strongest bands of affection ; and, after a very short time, those new friends whom he had made in Dublin had become strongly attached to him. He was at this time very keen on the study of Irish, and made continual use of as much Irish as he knew. The society of girls had apparently no attraction for him. He preferred the company of young men, and never paid any attention to the girls belonging to the Branch, not even to

the sisters and friends of his male companions. This indifference to female charms was characteristic of him as long as I knew him. He had many women friends for whom he cherished a high regard; but it was their qualities of mind and character, and the work which they did for the cause of Ireland, that alone evoked his admiration. The usual philanderings and flirtations of young men of his age had little interest or attraction for him, though he sometimes amused himself by chaffing his young friends over their weaknesses in that direction.

Although, as I have said, the plans and preparations for an insurrection had been commenced immediately after the outbreak of the European War, the date of the Rising was not decided on until January, 1916. James Connolly feared that the mistakes of 1848 and 1865 would be repeated, and the right moment for striking a blow would be allowed to slip by. He was not much concerned with the prospects of military success, but believed that a "protest in arms" in the streets of Dublin against English rule was essential, and threatened to force a crisis by calling out the Citizen Army and acting independently of the Volunteers. About the beginning of February I brought a message to Liverpool for transmission to America and Germany giving the date of the rising, and the proposed arrangements for the landing of a shipful of arms which the Germans undertook to carry out on the day of the Rising. It was originally proposed to land the arms in Dublin,

but later it was decided that they should be landed at Fenit, Co. Kerry, on the northern extremity of Tralee Bay.

Meanwhile members of the Executive, and the majority of the officers and rank and file of the Irish Volunteers remained in ignorance of these preparations, although the prospect of a "rising" some time in the summer was a matter of common gossip among the men, particularly among the I.R.B. section of them. Furthermore the English Government, with all its elaborate espionage system, had not only no knowledge, but no suspicion of what was impending. None the less the growing strength of the Irish Volunteers, gave the English authorities in Ireland much concern. Their reports, however, of the numbers and armament of the Volunteers throughout the country, supplied by the Royal Irish Constabulary, were very exact, and they did not believe that a body so small in numbers and so poorly armed would attempt an insurrection. On the other hand the Volunteers had declared their intention of resisting any attempt to disarm them, and it was fairly certain that they meant it, and that any attempt to disarm them would provoke a conflict in Ireland which the English authorities, at this critical stage of the European War, were very anxious to avoid. They felt, therefore, that there was nothing to do but to put up with the armed parades of Volunteers, and confined themselves to petty persecution, arrests of leaders, and steps to prevent Volunteers getting further armament.

On March 20th an incident happened at

Tullamore, which illustrates the condition of the country at the time. A handful of Volunteers, meeting in their rooms, were besieged by a howling mob who waved Union Jacks, and, calling them "pro-Germans," attempted to break into the place. Meanwhile the police (R.I.C.) looked on calmly. When, however, things got dangerous, and one of the Volunteers fired a shot in the air to disperse the crowd, the police broke into the building and attempted to disarm the only two Volunteers who were armed. They resisted, wounded a policeman, and got away. The state of opinion in the town was further illustrated by the fact that next day there was a move by local employers "to sack all Sinn Feiners in their employ." They thought better of it, however, and the ultimate effect of the incident was to increase the prestige of the Volunteers.

On March 24th, Mellows and Ernest Blythe were forcibly deported to England and detained there. Mr. Birrell and Lord Wimborne, according to their evidence at the Royal Commission into the 1916 Insurrection, contemplated a series of wholesale arrests and deportations, of which this was the experimental forerunner. A few days before Easter Week Mellows escaped back to Dublin to head the insurgents in County Galway.

A parade of all the Dublin Volunteers held in College Green on St. Patrick's Day, gave a striking impression of their steady increase in strength and military efficiency. In Dublin they were now over 3,000 strong, while in the whole country they numbered about 18,000.

The Citizen Army was only 200 strong, and the Hibernian Rifles were less than 50. With this little force it was proposed to fight the might of England.

Parades and series of manœuvres by Volunteers all over Ireland were announced by a General Order of the Headquarters Staff for Easter Sunday, April 23rd. This was the day fixed for the Insurrection. Probably never in the history of the world before was the assembly of armed men for the purpose of an insurrection announced in a public proclamation weeks beforehand—and this without the English Government suspecting anything. Of course the majority of the rank and file, and some of the Executive of the Volunteers, also suspected nothing. Eoin MacNeill, who was "Chief of Staff," knew nothing. Even many of the rank and file who had been talking confidently of a coming rising, never dreamed that the Easter Week manœuvres, so audaciously announced, constituted the promised "day." Of course there were many men engaged on special work in connection with the preparations who knew; but these were mostly I.R.B. men. Among all these there was no informer, and no imprudent "blab," and the English authorities remained entirely in the dark.

The only warning which the English authorities received came not from Ireland but from America, and its full significance was not realised. On Sunday, April 16th, General Friend, Commander-in-Chief of the English Forces in Ireland, received a notification from the British Admiralty that a

disguised German ship was due to arrive off the coast of Ireland on the 21st or 22nd April, and that a rising was timed for Easter Eve. The latter part of the information was received with scepticism, but a look out was kept on the Irish coast for the expected vessel.

On Wednesday, April 19th, Eoin MacNeill discovered that a rising was contemplated, and proceeded to take steps to countermand the proposed Easter Sunday manœuvres. Learning of this MacDiarmida and MacDonagh had an interview with him, and believed they had succeeded in persuading him to allow their plans to be "given a chance." MacNeill, however, although apparently acquiescing, was evidently far from satisfied, and after later enquiries and consideration decided that the insurrection would be a fatal blunder, and made an ill-timed effort to stop it.

Sir Roger Casement, in Germany, had also come to the conclusion that the enterprise was a hopeless one, and set out for Ireland in a submarine accompanied by Monteith, and a soldier of the Irish Brigade called Bailey, with the intention of inducing the Irish leaders to abandon this enterprise, or, if he failed in this, of taking his share in the risks of the struggle. Casement believed that an Irish Rising would be hopeless without the landing of German forces in Ireland, and this, he knew, was out of the question. He did not know that our leaders did not desire a German landing, even if this were feasible.

Casement and his two companions left the

submarine in a collapsible boat, and, after a prolonged struggle with a rough sea, landed on a lonely part of the Kerry coast, Banna Strand, eight miles from Tralee. Sir Roger was too exhausted to travel further. Monteith and Bailey left him hiding in the sandhills, and made their way on foot to Tralee. They inquired for the local Volunteer Captain, and were directed to Austin Stack, who at the time was accompanied by Con Collins, sent down from Dublin by Sean MacDiarmuda on business connected with the work of the I.R.B. The surprise of the two at the appearance of Monteith was great, for the arrival of Casement was entirely unexpected. They set out to the rescue of Sir Roger in a motor, but discovered the sandhills were being searched by an R.I.C. patrol from Ardfert. Sir Roger was captured by the R.I.C., but his identity was not known for some time. That evening Austin Stack went up to the police barracks to make enquiries, and was arrested. Later Con Collins was arrested. Monteith escaped, but Bailey was taken on Saturday night, and next day admitted everything, stating that "a rising had been timed for that day." As the Easter Sunday manoeuvres had been called off at this time, Dublin Castle believed the danger was past.

On Good Friday also the German ship "Aud," conveying the arms for the landing at Fenit, sailing under the Norwegian flag, was intercepted off the Kerry coast by a British cruiser and convoyed to C  bh (or "Queenstown"). When approaching the harbour the crew hoisted the

German colours, and blew up their ship, which sunk, the three officers and nineteen sailors on board being rescued and made prisoners. The ship, it is stated, contained 20,000 rifles, a number of machine guns, and a large quantity of ammunition.

Yet another mishap occurred in Kerry on Friday night. A party of three Volunteers from Dublin, Dan Sheehan, Con Keating, and Charles Monahan, engaged in arrangements for the Rising, were being driven in a motor from Killarney to Cahirciveen for Valencia, when the driver took a wrong turning, with the result that the car ran right into the sea at Ballykissane Pier, near Killorglin. The car turned upside down, and the three men, being pinned beneath it, were drowned. The driver, James MacInerney (himself a Volunteer) was flung out of the car and escaped.

The news of this chapter of accidents reached the organizers of the insurrection in Dublin early on Saturday morning, but caused no alteration in their determination to go on with the work. Strange to say these happenings in the South did not convince the English authorities that so ambitious a scheme as a general rising was contemplated. It was made clear, however, by their evidence before the Royal Commission on the Insurrection that they had definitely decided on a series of wholesale arrests and internments, and on the forcible disarmament of the Volunteers, and that, if we had not struck first, we would have been attacked under circumstances which gave our enemy all the advantage.

The news from Kerry, however, and reports he had received from Volunteer officers as to the strength and armament of the Volunteers in various parts of the country, had convinced Eoin MacNeill that the rising was hopeless. He took the extraordinary action of consulting, not the men with whom he had agreed to let the rising go on, but a number of men who knew nothing till then of the undertaking, some of whom were not even Volunteers.

As the result of his consultations Eoin MacNeill decided to try to stop the Rising. The method he adopted in this case was also extraordinary. Without notifying any of those responsible for the organisation of the Insurrection he secured the prominent publication in the "Sunday Independent" of the following notice, signed by himself as "Chief of Staff":—

"Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish Volunteers for to-morrow, Easter Sunday, are hereby rescinded, and no parades, marches or other movements of Irish Volunteers will take place. Each individual Volunteer will obey this order strictly in every particular."

The consternation which this announcement caused us may be readily imagined. Many irrevocable steps had already been taken in Dublin and all over the country, and the effect of this undreamed of move seemed to be to cut away the ground beneath our feet.

The "parade" which was to commence the

Insurrection in Dublin was called for 4 p.m., on Easter Sunday. All save the small number in the know regarded the announcement in the "Sunday Independent" as a definite countermanding order.

I may mention, in this place, that it had been found necessary to put the General Secretary of the Irish Volunteers, Mr. Bulmer Hobson, under arrest. Although a prominent member of the I.R.B. he had been kept in ignorance of the details of the preparations for the Rising, as he was known to be strongly opposed to any such attempt. His co-operation with MacNeill's countermanding orders rendered his detention a matter of prudence. He was released as soon as the Insurrection was fairly started.

Of the proceedings of the Sunday I think it better to give a personal narrative, as all accounts based on hearsay are unreliable, and the men chiefly concerned are all dead. Furthermore, Collins, the subject of this history, was in my company the greater part of the day.

Early on Easter Sunday morning I was summoned to Liberty Hall where a conference of the leaders of the Insurrection was in progress. On the conclusion of the conference Sean MacDiarmuda informed me that they had decided "to call off the thing for the present," and discussed methods of sending messages to the country. At the same time he told me to hold myself in readiness for further orders, and to keep our Battalion Staff together at Headquarters. He then asked me to escort Tom Clarke to a place of safety. I brought him up to the

Keating Branch. On the way Clarke complained bitterly of the action of MacNeill, and declared : " Our plans were so perfect, and now everything is spoiled. I feel as if I'd like to go away in a corner and cry." Tom Clarke had a peculiarly dry, unemotional manner, and rarely made a strong statement, and this utterance from such a man made a powerful impression on me.

I was next summoned to the First Battalion Headquarters in Blackhall Street, and there I met Eamonn Daly, the Commandant, (I was Vice-Commandant), Eamonn Duggan, Ned Morkan, and other officers. Later I was instructed to return to the Keating Branch, keep my men together there, and wait for further orders. When I returned to the Keating Branch, Michael Collins was there, and he remained in my company for the rest of the day, till we got the final order about ten o'clock to be ready to go out in the morning.

It was a day of messages and messengers, scares and rumours, orders and countermanding orders. A great many men had been given duties in connection with the cutting of wires, destruction of bridges, procuring of various kinds of equipment and the like, and others were being used without being let into the secret. The problem was what to do under the altered circumstances, and how so to arrange matters that all these services would be equally available at whatever hour, if any, a fresh attempt was decided on. Men were in and out of the Branch with messages, reports and orders in a continuous stream. In the evening other members of the

Branch, male and female, dropped in, who knew nothing of what was brewing, and all this business had to be transacted in such a manner as not to arouse their suspicions. We had to laugh and jest with them and feign a careless indifference which was very far from our real feelings.

In a moment of lull, Collins, Gearóid O'Sullivan and I slipped down to a little tea shop near the Pillar and had some tea. I remember we had a very merry meal of it, and joked with the waitresses, asking them where they would spend Easter Monday. We had a shrewd suspicion that we would be in action by then, but we had as yet no definite word.

About ten o'clock at night Ned Daly arrived at the Keating Branch and informed me that we were "going out" at midday on Easter Monday. He instructed me to report at Liberty Hall at six in the morning. I mention this fact because it was not till about eight o'clock next morning that we got final definite orders from Thomas MacDonagh, the Dublin Brigade Commandant, at Liberty Hall, to go on with the mobilisation, and carry out the programme arranged.

Joseph Plunkett, to whom Collins was acting as aide-de-camp, was at this time lying in a private nursing home, and it is literally true that he rose out of his dying bed to take part in the Rising. None who saw him at the time could doubt that the end was near. It was necessary for Collins to attend him in the nursing home, and bring him across to the scene of action.

Commandant W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, who accompanied him on the occasion, has recorded his experience in the official organ of the Irish Army in the course of which he states:—

“ The impressions I gathered of Collins at this first meeting were those of an exceedingly virile young man, of great agility, and lightness of hand and foot ; very silent, and with a slight tendency to moroseness in one so young and virile.”

That anybody should get an impression of “ moroseness ” from Collins is indeed surprising. He was in the gayest of spirits when I parted with him the night before.

The “ mobilisation ” was carried out rapidly and effectively. There had been many “ test ” mobilisations before. Messengers on foot and on bicycles went to the houses of the different Volunteers and instructed them to report to their units at the Battalion Headquarters at 10 o'clock. Many Volunteers, assuming that the counter-manding orders of Sunday were final, had gone away for the day to the country, the seaside, or the races, and only about one-third of the available men turned up on parade. The total number reported on parade from the various Headquarters was 687, but the returns were probably incomplete. With this small band of men the projected Rising was proceeded with, and at noon the General Post Office, and a number of other buildings and positions in the City and outskirts were seized and fortified by

bodies of the Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army. The General Post Office was made the General Headquarters of the Republican Army, and the following proclamation was issued :—

POBLACHT NA h-EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her own military organisation, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and supported by her exiled children in America, and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government

has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms.

Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of **its** freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation **among** the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation, and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences, carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland, and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional
Government.

THOMAS J. CLARKE.

SEAN MAC DIARMUDA. THOMAS MACDONAGH

P. H. PEARSE. EAMONN CEANNT.

JAMES CONNOLLY. JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

The audacity of our proceedings, the number of buildings occupied, and the stubborn fight made by our forces, gave both the English authorities and the Irish public a greatly exaggerated idea of the number of men engaged. It is difficult to form an exact estimate of our numbers, but it is certain that all the Volunteers, members of the Citizen Army and Fianna who took part in the fighting in Dublin did not exceed 1,200. This represented less than half our paper strength and included a number of men who had never belonged to any of our organizations, and only joined up when the fighting began. Our armament was mixed. Some were armed with the "Howth rifles," German Mausers of the

seventies. These were very effective weapons, but they required a special kind of ammunition of which only a very limited supply was available. Others had Lee-Enfield rifles, Martini-Enfields, and Martini-Henrys, others had only shotguns, and some had to be content with revolvers or automatic pistols. We had accumulated a quantity of "home-made" bombs of a very crude pattern—tin canisters filled with shrapnel and explosives—but these proved of very little value. It was only in our later war that we learned to make effective hand grenades.

The composition of our forces was truly representative of the people. It included members of every class and creed, rich and poor, grey-headed men and youths, men from every part of Ireland. A number of small boys, members of the Fianna, acted as scouts and messengers, and even took part in the fighting. These little boys were among the most daring and useful members of our forces. A number of devoted women attended to each unit, cooking, washing, tending the wounded, and sharing the hardships and perils of the men with cheerful courage.

The General Post Office, as I have said, was made the Headquarters, and here all the Provisional Government, save Ceannt and MacDonagh, were stationed. Patrick Pearse was nominally Commander-in-Chief, but the real man in charge of all the operations in Dublin was James Connolly, with the title of Commandant General of Dublin.

The Post Office was first taken by a handful of the leaders and their staff and men of the



MAJOR-GENERAL PIARAS BEASLAI.

Citizen Army, the small guard of English soldiers being easily captured and disarmed. Staff officers, men detailed for special services, men who had found it difficult to join their own units, I.R.B. men and others concentrated in this quarter. The entire range of buildings on both sides as far as O'Connell Bridge was occupied by the insurrectionary troops, and barricades were built at Abbey Street.

A band of about two dozen Citizen Army men under Sean Connolly made an unsuccessful effort to capture Dublin Castle. The attempt to rush the Upper Castle Yard was nearly successful, but the sentry got the great iron gate shut and locked just in time, a policeman being killed in the firing. Had the insurgents succeeded in getting into the Castle (which had only a very small garrison at the moment, entirely unprepared for attack) it would have been difficult to dislodge them, and the capture would have created a great sensation and enhanced our prestige throughout the country. Failing to achieve this object, the insurgents occupied the City Hall and other buildings opposite the Castle Gate, and put up a fierce fight for three days. They suffered more casualties than any other unit, 26 being killed, including their courageous leader Sean Connolly.

The Citizen Army also occupied Stephen's Green Park, until this became untenable owing to the military seizing the Shelbourne Hotel, when they fell back on the College of Surgeons. Countess Markievicz was in command in this area. Men of the Citizen Army also held an

outpost at Davy's publichouse on Portobello Bridge, near the military barracks. Liberty Hall was also occupied as an outpost. Altogether the Citizen Army did a remarkable amount of work in proportion to their numbers.

A band of Fianna was responsible for the exploit of capturing the Magazine in the Phoenix Park, and setting it on fire. Unfortunately the fire was extinguished before it reached the explosives, but not before considerable damage was done.

The First Battalion held a line stretching from Cabra Road to the Quays. The main body occupied the North Dublin Union, Church Street, and all the adjoining streets, and the Four Courts. Ned Daly, a brother of Mrs. Tom Clarke, and nephew of John Daly of Limerick, was Commandant. I was Vice-Commandant. Posts on the North Circular Road and Cabra Road were held by Jim Sullivan, the Adjutant, while Sean Heuston held the Mendicity Institution on the Southern Quays, and with a tiny band of defenders put up a stubborn defence against the attacks of vastly superior numbers.

It was also intended to occupy Broadstone Terminus, but when we went out our line was so long, and our numbers so few, that we had not enough men to hold it. By the time we were able to attack it, it was occupied by English troops, and our attack was unsuccessful. The railway line was destroyed, and bridges blown up in several places.

The main body of the Second Battalion occupied Jacob's Biscuit Factory and buildings

in the vicinity. The occupation of this place was of no great apparent military value, and no serious attack was made on it during the week. Thomas MacDonagh, now Brigade Commandant, took command here of his old Battalion. With him was Tom Hunter, who had succeeded him as Battalion Commandant. A portion of the second Battalion, under M. W. O'Reilly, were stationed in O'Connell Street, occupying the Imperial Hotel and other Buildings. Buildings in Fairview were also occupied by snipers.

The Third Battalion, under Eamonn De Valera, who had become Brigade Adjutant, but now returned to his old Battalion, occupied Westland Row Station, and a considerable portion of the railway line as far as Lansdowne Road, Boland's Flour Mill, the old Ringsend Distillery, and other buildings. Outposts also occupied houses at the corner of Haddington Road and Northumberland Road (commanding Beggar's Bush Barracks), and at Clanwilliam Place, commanding the approach to Dublin from Dun Laoghaire. Here they did terrible execution on the troops arriving from England.

The Fourth Battalion, under Eamonn Ceannt, Commandant, and Cathal Brugha, Vice-Commandant, occupied the South Dublin Union, Marrowbone Lane Distillery, and other buildings in the neighbourhood and outposts. William T. Cosgrave, now President of the Free State, served in this area. The most noteworthy feature of the fighting here was the gallantry of Cathal Brugha, who received no less than 25 wounds while defending the building known as

the Nurse's Home. Wrongly believing that the English troops had broken into the building, the wounded officer ordered his men to retreat and leave him to his fate. They obeyed reluctantly, but shortly after Ceannt and Cosgrave came to his assistance with a party and brought him to a place of safety. He recovered from his many wounds, but remained somewhat lame for about three years afterwards.

The plans for the occupation of Dublin, when made, had of course pre-supposed the successful landing and distribution of the arms from the German ship, and the co-operation of Volunteers all over Ireland. The capture of the ship, and MacNeill's countermanding order, rendered this hope of relieving the pressure vain, and the few bodies of Volunteers who did take action in County Dublin, in Galway, in Wexford and in Louth were not able to produce much effect. The plans for Dublin in general were wonderfully well devised, but there were grave faults. The occupation of the open park of Stephen's Green, surrounded by buildings, was an absurdity from the military point of view, and the occupation of Jacob's Factory a meaningless waste of men. The vital service of Kingsbridge with the South of Ireland was not interfered with. The greatest blunder of all, however, to my mind (from a purely military point of view) was the locating of the Provisional Government and Headquarters Staff in the General Post Office. It was important that the Post Office should be occupied; but the heads of the Insurrection should have made their headquarters in a small

obscure building in some side street. By concentrating the heart and brains of the movement in one large central building that could easily be surrounded and isolated, they made the task of the English troops a much simpler one. Apart from this, Capel Street should have been occupied. A few snipers in that street could have kept the line clear between the First Battalion's area and the General Post Office, so that the garrison of the latter could not be cut off, but could fall back on our support. However, no hope of military success existed from the start, and it was only a question of holding out as long as we could.

Although the "coming rising" was a matter of common gossip in Dublin in the latter days of Holy Week, the British authorities were taken entirely off their guard. Colonel Cowan explained to the Royal Commission that at the time they had "only" 120 officers and 2,265 men immediately available in Dublin—of course an inadequate force to deal with a thousand badly armed Volunteers. However, 2,500 arrived from the Curragh that evening, and 1,000 from Belfast next day; but Sir Matthew Nathan found that this force of 6,000 men was "contrary to expectation, insufficient to deal with the situation." Further reinforcements arrived from England on the Wednesday, landing at Dun Laoghaire. As the railway line to Dublin was cut they marched in, and their officers, with an almost incredible military incapacity, marched them four deep through the streets, without scouts or protection, with the result that at

Mount Street Bridge they met with heavy casualties from a small handful of Volunteers.

Among the British reinforcements who arrived in Dublin was a body of the Dublin Fusiliers. We had hoped that these men would shrink from fighting their fellow-countrymen. A number of them showed reluctance to do so, but their courage did not reach the standard of refusing to obey orders. Some showed special animus against us, and brutally ill-treated the prisoners who were captured.

It does not enter into the scope of this narrative to describe the fighting in the various positions in Dublin during the course of the week. There were fierce encounters in various quarters in most of which the British forces suffered heavily.

Troops continued to pour into Dublin until the insurgents were outnumbered by at least twenty to one. None the less the English officers showed no desire to come to close grips with their opponents. A slow investment of the centre of the city was carried out until by Friday the O'Connell Street area was surrounded and practically isolated. Fires had commenced in this area as early as Wednesday. The General Post Office and other buildings were now subjected to a continuous artillery bombardment, and incendiary bombs were used, with the result that the Republican Headquarters took fire and burned fiercely. By Friday night both sides of O'Connell Street below the Pillar were in flames. The men in the General Post Office were ultimately forced to evacuate the burning building. They

retreated up Moore Street under fire, the O'Rahilly being killed in the retreat. James Connolly, who had been wounded on the Thursday, was carried out on a stretcher. At length on Saturday morning a meeting of Headquarters Staff was held in a building in Moore Street, and it was decided to surrender. A young lady who accompanied them carried a message to the English Commanding Officer who had taken up his headquarters, oddly enough, in Tom Clarke's shop. At 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 29th, the English forces ceased fire, and Pearse issued the following order to all units:—

“In order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens, and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, the members of the Provisional Government present at Headquarters have agreed to an unconditional surrender, and the Commandants in the various districts in the City and Country will order their commands to lay down their arms.”

This order was conveyed to the various units in Dublin and the country. Although most of the fighting was done in Dublin, Volunteers in the country had not been entirely inactive. In North Dublin the Fifth Battalion, under Tom Ashe, had covered itself with renown. A small band of these men fought their way under fire to the relief of Sean Heuston's men in the Mendicity Institution, and shared the brunt of the defence. The remainder, about thirty strong, moved around County Dublin and County Meath,

operating something like the "flying columns" in the later warfare with the Black and Tans. They captured four police barracks in County Dublin, and at Ashbourne, Co. Meath, encountered a body of 54 Royal Irish Constabulary. A pitched battle ensued in which the Volunteers, numbering less than thirty, after killing and wounding several of their opponents, charged and captured all the remainder. Dick Mulcahy, afterwards Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, took an important part in this fight.

In Wexford the Volunteers did not act until the Wednesday, when they marched on Enniscorthy and occupied it for the rest of the week, until ordered to surrender on Sunday, the R.I.C. being blockaded in their barracks. In Galway the insurgents "went out on the hills," under the leadership of Mellowes, but did not come into combat with any English forces. The Louth insurgents captured a police barracks.

The Volunteers of Cork City not only remained inactive, but surrendered their guns to the military authorities at the instance of the Lord Mayor and the Bishop. The Volunteer Commandant was Tomás MacCurtáin, and the Vice-Commandant, Terence MacSwiney, both of whom gave unmistakable proof of their courage at a later date, showing that even the best men may sometimes fail at a crisis. In Limerick City also the Volunteers remained inactive, and handed up their guns to the English. Their Commandant was P. Colivet. Limerick was a pivotal position in our plans and the failure of the Limerick Volunteers was a bad blow.

In Cork County three brothers named Kent, of Castlelyons, Volunteers, defended themselves in their house against a party of R.I.C. who came to arrest them. A Head Constable was shot, after which a party of military laid a regular siege to the house. When Dick Kent had been killed, and Thomas and David Kent severely wounded, they surrendered. Thomas Kent was executed, and David Kent, the sole survivor, was sentenced to 20 years' penal servitude.

Of the surrendered prisoners in Dublin, the seven signatories, and seven others—Major John MacBride, Commandant Mallon of the Citizen Army, Ned Daly, Sean Heuston, Con Colbert, Michael O'Hanrahan and Liam Pearse, were shot in cold blood by order of General Maxwell. Sean Heuston and Colbert were mere boys; Liam Pearse was apparently shot for being the brother of Patrick. A large number of others were sentenced to death, but their sentence was commuted to penal servitude. One hundred and twenty-two men and a woman (Countess Markievicz) were sentenced to penal servitude, eighteen men to terms of hard labour, and the remainder of the captured prisoners were "interned" at first in English jails, and later in a camp at Frongoch in Wales. Sir Roger Casement was executed in England later.

Michael Collins served throughout the week in the Post Office as Joe Plunkett's aide-de-camp, wearing a staff captain's uniform. He was one of the hardest workers throughout the strenuous week. When the Post Office was on fire his breeches were burned by falling wood. He

retreated with his dying chief to Moore Street, and was among the surrendered prisoners of Headquarters Staff. They were brought to O'Connell Street, where later they were joined by the prisoners from the Four Courts, of whom I was one. We were all brought to the green in front of the Rotunda Hospital, and piled on top of one another on the grass practically like a lot of cattle surrounded by a ring of bayonets.

The officer in charge, a Captain Lee Wilson, an Irishman, now proceeded to amuse himself at our expense. He had prisoners hauled before him and stripped; he insulted, tortured and derided them in the presence of the others. He picked out old Tom Clarke, Ned Daly, Morkan, and others (including myself) for his bestial diversion.

Michael Collins was a witness to all this. He was fumbling in his pocket for some malted milk tablets to give to a comrade when he was pounced on by Wilson, searched, insulted, and ill-treated.

In 1920 Collins discovered that Wilson was a District Inspector of the R.I.C. at Gorey. Shortly afterwards Wilson met with a sudden and violent death.

On Sunday morning the prisoners were brought to Richmond Barracks. They were placed sitting on the floor of the Gymnasium, and the political detectives of the "G" Division of the Dublin Police came like a flock of carrion crows to pick out "suspects" as victims for courtmartial. I was one of the first picked out, and for the rest of the day could watch the detectives passing

to and fro among the two thousand prisoners studying their faces for victims for the firing squad. Anybody who had seen that sight may be pardoned if he felt little compunction at the subsequent shooting of those same "G" men.

Michael Collins, seated in a prominent position, was unknown to the "G" men, and was passed by a hundred times without special notice. They little thought that this young man was soon to smash up their espionage system and end it for ever.

When about a hundred victims had been picked out, a body of about 300 more were marched off to the boat for deportation to England. Collins was among them. In the same batch of prisoners with Collins was Joe O'Reilly, who was destined henceforth to share all his vicissitudes. They were brought under military escort to Stafford Jail, where they were kept prisoners for two months. Then they were removed to an internment camp at Frongoch in North Wales.

CHAPTER VI.

Frongoch Prison Camp

FRONGOCH, the place of internment to which Michael Collins was removed, is a hamlet situated in a desolate, sparsely-inhabited valley in the neighbourhood of the Lake of Bala, in Merionethshire, in North Wales. There had been formerly a large whiskey distillery here ; but the making of whiskey at this place ceased at the commencement of the European War. and the distillery buildings were surrounded with barbed wire and turned into an internment camp for German prisoners.

The camp was constructed in two divisions. The distillery buildings constituted the South Camp. On higher land, situated on the other side of a road, a number of wooden huts had been erected, constituting the North Camp. This place was now cleared of its German prisoners to accommodate some 1,800 Irishmen. A certain number of these were men who had actually taken part in the Insurrection in Dublin and elsewhere, but, as will be readily guessed from the figures I have given previously, these were in a minority. Men all over the country who were suspected of Sinn Fein sympathies were

arrested and interned. In many cases the suspicions were entirely groundless.

These wholesale arrests, dictated by panic, were a huge blunder from the British point of view. They helped to convert many to sympathy with us ; they provided a fresh grievance and a standing subject for agitation, and by bringing representative men from all parts of Ireland together in the intimacy of an internment camp they helped to strengthen our nucleus of future organisation, and to secure greater unity of thought and effort.

The prisoners were allowed to manage the internal discipline and working arrangements of the camps under their selected leaders, through whom only they dealt with the English authorities. M. W. O'Reilly, Vice-Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, was elected Commandant of the North Camp, where Collins was interned. The inhabitants of each hut elected a "hut leader," and Collins was leader of Hut No. 10.

Among the body of men who had returned to Ireland early in 1916, and had taken part in the fighting in Dublin, Collins, with his sociability, energy and daring, rapidly became a leading spirit. These formed the nucleus of his followers. His high spirits, cheerfulness, and his courageous counsels and hopeful outlook attracted the more ardent spirits to him, and he began to exercise a powerful influence among what were called "the fighting men." The internees were a very heterogeneous collection, of all ages and temperaments, of the most varied national outlook. There were many who at first

condemned the Insurrection of Easter Week as a folly; many whose counsels savoured of timidity and despair. The failure of the Insurrection left the future of the national cause a vague uncertainty in which few saw much prospect of any immediate progress towards the goal of national freedom. The "separatists," the "fighting men," conceived the idea of forming themselves into a secret organisation, to be the nucleus of a revived Irish Republican Brotherhood, and Collins was one of the most earnest and active in this work of organisation. Through this secret body, and their courage and unanimity against timid and divided counsels, these men acquired an influence in the camp out of all proportion to their numbers or official positions.

Imprisonment is a dreary and depressing thing under the most favourable conditions, and the internees of Frongoch had special cause to be despondent. Collins was remarkable for his high spirits and cheerfulness. He went in for athletic exercises with youthful zest. One who remembers him at this time describes him as "always up to horseplay, chasing round the grounds like a schoolboy."

But at regular periods he withdrew himself from those sports, and gave himself up to solitary reading and study for hours at a time. He allotted much time to the study of the Irish language and Irish history.

Collins was not universally popular. His boyish self-assertiveness, his scorn and ridicule for counsels of moderation, caused him to be regarded

askance by those whose supreme desire was peace and "avoiding trouble." He laughed at them as cowards and old fogies, they called him "crank" and "firebrand."

Perhaps his favourite companion during this period was the late Sean Hales, later to play a notable part in the guerilla warfare in Collins's native district, and to die by the assassin's bullet.

The wholesale and indiscriminating nature of the arrests in Ireland had naturally provided a subject for agitation, in which even those not in the least in sympathy with Sinn Fein could join; while the reports of hardships endured by the internees evoked much popular sympathy.

The internment order served on each prisoner gave him the right to appeal to an Advisory Council set up for the purpose of considering representations for the release of internees. A very large number of those interned could have secured release by appealing, as there was no evidence against them, but many of them objected on principle to appealing to any such British tribunal, and others were restrained by *esprit de corps* from availing themselves of the opportunity, and there were very few appeals. This placed the English authorities in a quandary. They knew they had many prisoners in Frongoch whose internment could not be justified, and that this constituted an embarrassment to themselves, and food for agitation and propaganda in Ireland. They were forced to the humiliating device of bringing up all the internees before the Advisory Council

in London as if they had appealed. Most of the prisoners, when called before this body, declined to make any statement. Collins was among their number. Despite this their cases were gone into and a number of releases ordered, with the result that before long the number of internees was reduced to about a third of the original number.

Those men who, like Collins, had returned from England to Ireland in 1916, had naturally no desire that their cases should be examined by any English authority, which would hold them liable for military service in the English Army, under the terms of what was popularly termed the Conscription Act. In fact two young London Irishmen among the prisoners, the brothers Sean and Ernest Nunan, were identified while in London and separated from the other prisoners, and an attempt was made to force them into the service of the British Army. The two youths put up a strenuous resistance. Solitary confinement, irons, bread and water, and various tortures and outrages failed to break their spirit. Another prisoner, Tomás O'Donoghue, had a similar experience, and made an equally determined fight. After they had endured months of imprisonment, and daily attempts by threats, torture and appeals to induce them to betray their principles and accept service in the Army of their enemy, the English authorities were forced by the pressure of public opinion to desist from their efforts and release these men. From this time on the position of those men who had returned to England, and the

claim of the English Government to force them into their Army, became a burning question among the Frongoch prisoners.

The first trouble among the prisoners, however, arose in the North Camp over the question of unsuitable work to which the men objected. As a result of this the men's Commandant, M. W. O'Reilly, was removed to Reading Jail.

By the middle of August the releases recommended by the Advisory Committee had ceased, and only about 600 prisoners remained. The North Camp, where Collins was, was then closed down, and the prisoners in it were shifted to the South Camp—the distillery buildings. Most of these men had declined to fill up identification forms or assist the authorities with any information about themselves. As a result, those in charge were uncertain of the identity of many of them, a fact which was to have an important bearing on subsequent events.

It was at this time that the first serious trouble began. A fatigue party of eight prisoners, employed in clearing away the ash-bins of their own quarters, were ordered to clear away the refuse of the soldiers' quarters also. They refused, and were sent away to the North Camp for punishment, all their privileges of getting newspapers, smoking, receiving visits, letters, and the like being stopped. The same scene occurred daily; daily eight more prisoners refused to do this work, and were sent for punishment to the North Camp. Another party of internees volunteered for work in the North Camp and, under guise of this, contrived to

smuggle food, tobacco and messages to the men under punishment, and a regular system of communication was built up between the two camps. Collins played a leading part in organising this system of communication.

Early in September the English authorities made an attempt to seize another prisoner, Hugh Thornton, for military service in the English Army. At first Thornton refused to answer to his name or number, and the English officials were unable to identify him. The prisoners proposed that another man should give himself up in his place with a view to embarrassing the English Government, but Hugh Thornton decided to give himself up. He was taken away, and for his refusal to accept service in the English Army was sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour. Hugh Thornton, who was killed in action during the Civil War, an officer in the Free State Army, was the brother of Frank Thornton, whose name will figure later in this narrative.

The "refugees," as they were called, had now become the main bone of contention, and the difficulty which the English authorities had in identifying Thornton, suggested a new move to the more forward section of the prisoners. It was proposed that all the prisoners should refuse to answer to their names or numbers.

Joe O'Reilly, afterwards Collins's aide-de-camp, then a fellow-internee of his, contributes the following reminiscence of that period:—

"The 'refugees' were the bone of contention, and these recognised him as their leader. Some

of the other prisoners (who had not fought) blamed the refugees for causing all the trouble. Certain refugees met to consider whether they should not give themselves up. Mick burst in on the meeting and sat down. When he heard their proposition he told them to do nothing of the kind but sit tight, and not to mind the cowards."

During this time the daily strike of fatigue parties continued, and daily a fresh batch of men was sent for punishment to the North Camp, until the number of prisoners under punishment exceeded a hundred. Ultimately, early in October, the contest ended in a victory for the prisoners. An order from the English Home Office directed that the prisoners should not in future be required to remove rubbish from the guards' quarters. A week later all the prisoners were removed to the North Camp.

Shortly after this a fresh attempt to "conscript refugees" caused renewed excitement in the Camp. Three brothers named King were seized for military service, and two of them, who refused to submit, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The third, who was declared medically unfit, was sent back to the Camp. These men were identified by the ingenious device of summoning them as members of a party to draw clothing issued to them from the stores. The incident determined the prisoners to be on their guard against any further underhand tricks on the part of the military authorities for the purpose of identifying "wanted" men. It was generally agreed that

in future no names or numbers should be answered to.

The issue came to a head early in November when the authorities made an effort to identify two other "refugees," Fintan Murphy and Michael Murphy. They resorted to the contemptible device of announcing that Fintan Murphy was to be released, and Michael Murphy granted parole on account of his wife's illness. As Michael Murphy was not married the trick was seen through, and when the roll was called the men refused to answer to their names, with the exception of a few who had not been warned in time. Fintan Murphy was well-known by appearance to the English camp officials. He was seized and taken away, but the problem of identifying Michael Murphy proved too much for them. The roll was called again and again, and appeals and threats used to induce the men to answer it, but in vain. At length the English Camp Staff resorted to the expedient of separating the men they recognised from those they did not. Michael Collins was among the "recognised group," but this left about half the men unidentified, and a large number more they were not sure of. A prisoner named Barrett, from Galway, was arrested and charged with being Michael Murphy, and taken away to London where his identity was ultimately established, and he had to be sent back to the Camp.

Meanwhile the Camp authorities placed the 200 prisoners whom they could not recognise in the South Camp, where the men promptly went on hunger strike. After three days the

hunger-strike was abandoned upon the authorities agreeing to let them return to the North Camp without revealing their identity. This, however, was only a temporary respite; and Michael Collins, during these few days, had been engaged in organising preparations for the clash which he saw was inevitable. Two days later new troops were brought into the Camp, the men were confined to their huts, and, the Camp Staff going round the huts, called the roll of the occupants of each hut. Out of 546 prisoners in the Camp only 204 answered to their names. The remaining 342, among whom was Michael Collins, were removed to the South Camp, and deprived of every privilege.

It must not be thought that the fact of 204 men answering to their names indicated a cowardly desire on the part of all the 204 to save themselves from punishment at the expense of their comrades. In such an accidental collection of internees there was, of course, a certain number of timid and selfish persons whose main concern it was to save themselves trouble; but most of those who answered to their names did so by agreement with their comrades. It was part of the plan to keep both Camps going; the identified men, not being under punishment, were able to keep in touch with the outer world through letters and visits, and a system had been organised, chiefly by Michael Collins, by which messages, tobacco, food and newspapers could be smuggled from the North Camp to those on punishment in the South Camp.

Collins, like many of the other prisoners in

the South Camp, was well known to the Camp authorities, but he consistently refused to answer to his name, and the mistake over Michael Murphy had made them disinclined to take any chances.

The unidentified men remained confined to the old distillery buildings under penal conditions up to their release, and had to submit to various deprivations owing to their refusal to assist the authorities in identifying their "wanted" comrades. Several of the "hut leaders" were courtmartialled for insubordination, but only nominal sentences were inflicted. Meanwhile a vigorous propaganda over the treatment of the internees had been carried on by their friends outside; and public opinion not only in Ireland, but even in England, became much exercised over their case. England being at a critical stage of the war at this time, the English Government was peculiarly sensitive to propaganda abroad, and the agitation over the Frongoch internees had a considerable effect on public opinion in America, which England had not yet succeeded in enlisting on her side in the War. The Frongoch internees had become a greater source of trouble and danger to the English Government in custody than they could possibly be if at large. It should be remembered that at this time, apart from the men in Frongoch, the English Government had 122 men whom they regarded as leaders of the Insurrection, serving terms of penal servitude under the same conditions as convicted criminals in the convict prisons of Portland and Dartmoor, and 18 others

serving terms of imprisonment with hard labour for complicity in the Insurrection. The Frongoch internees were for the most part men against whom they had no direct evidence.

The greater parts of the months of November and December were spent by the unidentified internees under punishment in the old distillery building of the South Camp. It was a dreary and depressing time. The severity of the winter in that bleak and exposed area confined them to their quarters most of the time, and all the privileges, which had formerly relieved the monotony of their lot, had been withdrawn from them. The ingenuity of the prisoners, however, evaded the precautions of the authorities, and there was constant communication with the privileged North Camp, and the smuggling in of forbidden luxuries and secret messages.

Christmas drew near, and the prisoners prepared to make the best they could of a Christmas spent in a prison camp. There had been rumours from time to time that they were to be released, but repeated disappointments had produced a feeling of scepticism. On the evening of December 22nd, however, the prisoners were startled to find themselves summoned to the dining-hall, where the Adjutant of the Camp announced to them that he had received an order for their immediate, unconditional release. It was proposed, he said, to release the prisoners from the West, South and North of Ireland that night, and the rest of the prisoners on the following day, so that all should be home for Christmas Day. He

asked the two batches of prisoners to separate, and to make out a list of their names and addresses, and the stations to which they were travelling.

There was a moment's silence. The prisoners looked doubtfully at each other, wondering whether this was another trick to identify the wanted men. Before anybody could move or speak Michael Collins sprang forward.

"It's no use," he shouted, "you'll get no names or addresses from us."

The Adjutant declared that he "didn't care a damn" for their names and addresses, but he had orders to release all. Collins questioned him about Michael Murphy, and the other men "wanted" for military service, and was told that all were to be released unconditionally. The Adjutant proposed that, if they feared identification, they should make out their own lists of batches of prisoners, with their names and addresses, and hand the completed lists to him, and Collins agreed to this.

The fact that Collins acted as spokesman for the men on this occasion illustrates the ascendancy he had obtained over them, although he had no official position of command.

On the following night the prisoners left for Ireland. Collins arrived in Dublin on the morning of December 24th. After a few hours in the capital he proceeded homewards to Clonakilty, arriving at his home on Christmas Day. The rejoicing over his arrival was abated by the death of his grandmother which occurred on the same day.

CHAPTER VII.

The Turning of the Tide January—April, 1917

ON April 30th, 1916, when we marched helpless, disarmed, prisoners through the streets of Dublin, amid the silence or the hostile demonstrations of the people, the national outlook seemed black indeed. I recalled a conversation I had had with Arthur Griffith on Good Friday, when he had no inkling of the coming insurrection. He had declared that the Volunteers were in a tremendously strong position, and were gaining ground daily, as long as they confined themselves to their present defensive tactics; but that any attempt on their part to take the offensive would ruin everything. Knowing of the approaching insurrection, I did not dare to argue with him lest I should arouse his suspicions. When I found myself one of a thousand disarmed prisoners in Richmond Barracks, I began to wonder whether Griffith were not right after all. The Volunteers were disarmed and captured; their effectiveness was ended; an excuse had been given to the British Government for the drastic suppression of all work for Irish freedom; the people of Ireland (for so it

seemed) had failed to rise to the occasion. Our banner had been unfurled in vain; and the last effort of the last surviving champions of Irish independence had ended in a tragic debacle.

While thinking in this strain in the Gymnasium of Richmond Barracks, where we were being "sorted out" for trial or internment by the detectives, I found myself in company with Tom Clarke, the old Fenian, who had served sixteen years in English convict prisons, only to come out and face death in a fresh effort against British rule. He spoke cheerfully, confidently. "This insurrection, though it has failed, will have a wonderful effect on the country," he said. "We will die, but it will be a different Ireland after us."

Sean MacDiarmuda spoke in a similar strain. "There will be executions; I suppose I will be shot; but the executions will create a reaction in the country which will wipe out the slavish pro-English spirit."

It is quite certain that, had the English Government been able to control their rage and panic, had they been astute enough to pretend that the insurrection was a trifling affair to be dealt with by trivial punishment—the imprisonment of the leaders, and the release of the rank and file—the effect of the insurrection upon the people of Ireland would have been much less, and the sympathy with them very limited. The majority of the Irish people still owned allegiance to the Irish Parliamentary Party; they had been trained into a machine-made

"unity" and docility, fed on Party propaganda and British war propaganda; they misunderstood us and our objects. Several local councils, when they heard of the insurrection, passed resolutions denouncing its instigators as agents of Germany—councils which afterwards deleted the resolutions from their minute books with shame and contrition.

Fortunately for the cause of Irish separatism, the cowardice and brutality of the English ruling classes triumphed over their political sagacity. Panic reigned and shrieked for blood. One of the ablest and most successful of Chief Secretaries, one of the most formidable opponents of Irish separatism, Augustine Birrell, was forced to resign, and a stupid and bloodthirsty soldier (bloodthirsty men are always stupid), General Sir John G. Maxwell, was made supreme dictator of the lives and liberties of the Irish people. Under his benign and enlightened régime fifteen of the surrendered prisoners were shot in cold blood, and 122 sentenced to penal servitude. The whole of Ireland was placed under martial law, and hundreds of men were arrested in every part of Ireland, however tame and peaceful, and sent to prison in England. In short, nothing was left undone to assist the cause of separatism. Birrell had proved the most formidable opponent of our work. Maxwell proved the most effective propagandist on behalf of the enemies of English rule in Ireland.

As I have quoted Arthur Griffith's opinion, expressed before Easter Week, as to the folly of an insurrection, I had better quote here a

later opinion of his, the nearest approximation I ever heard from him to a retraction of his earlier view.

Late in 1917 a dinner was given by a number of his friends to Professor Liam O Briain, one of the Easter Week Insurgents, on his appointment to the Professorship of Romance Languages in Galway University. Griffith was present at the dinner, and, speaking to a toast, indulged in a burst of confidence. He spoke of the executions of the Easter Week leaders in something like the following terms:—"I am not hot-blooded or emotional. I always try to keep cool and clear-minded, because we are fighting a powerful enemy, and cannot afford to let our judgments be ruled by our emotions. But when I heard in my prison cell that friends of mine, who had spent their lives in the service of Ireland, men whom I knew and loved, had been murdered in cold blood by the English Government, then something of the primeval man awoke in me; I clenched my fists, and ground my teeth with rage, and longed for vengeance on the murderers. I knew the English were brutal enough to do it; I did not think they would be stupid enough. Had I foreseen that, perhaps my views on the whole matter might have been different."

The executions evoked wide-spread sympathy in Ireland for the victims. They were all men of the highest character, and their brave and chivalrous conduct during the insurrection, and the fearless way in which they met their doom aroused general admiration. The shootings

were indiscriminate. By no stretch of the imagination could some of those shot be considered leaders; some were hardly more than boys. William Pearse was executed apparently for being the brother of Patrick Pearse. There would probably have been many more executions had not the outcry raised by these outrages alarmed the English Government into calling a halt.

The wholesale arrests throughout the country, mostly of men who had no connection, or even sympathy, with the rising, helped to embitter feeling against the English Government. In the past the public had insisted on calling the Irish Volunteers "Sinn Féin Volunteers," although there was no connection between the Volunteers and the Sinn Féin organisation. They now dubbed the insurrection the "Sinn Féin Rising," with the result that the title "Sinn Féin," which hitherto in the popular mind suggested a small cranky faction at war with the Irish Parliamentary Party, now came to suggest heroism and self-sacrifice.

The position of the Irish Parliamentary Party became increasingly difficult. They had made themselves the facile tools of the English Government in the work of humbugging the Irish people; the guns of Easter Week, and the guns of Maxwell's butcheries blew away the fogs of falsehood and humbug, and brought the Irish people face to face with the naked realities of the relations between the two countries. When Mr. Asquith, the English Prime Minister, announced in the House of Commons the first

three executions—the shooting of Pearse, MacDonagh and Tom Clarke—the announcement was received with cheers. It was asserted by Mr. Ginnell, M.P., and others, and currently believed in Ireland, that the Irish members joined in the cheering. The charge was indignantly denied, and one prefers, for the credit of Ireland, to believe it is untrue; but the damning fact remains that the Irish members received the announcement of the executions and the cheers that followed without a word of protest. It is also undeniable that Mr. Redmond, in a speech after this announcement, said:—

“ This outbreak, happily, seems to be over. It has been dealt with with firmness. That was not only right, but it was the duty of the Government. But, as the rebellion has been put down, I do beg of the Government not to show undue hardship or severity to the great mass of those implicated, on whose shoulders there lies a guilt far different from that of the instigators and promoters.”

Mr. Redmond had already, “ on behalf of his colleagues, and, he believed, the overwhelming majority of the people of Ireland,” expressed to the House of Commons “ the feeling of detestation and horror ” with which he regarded the insurrection. However, the “ horror and detestation ” excited in the people of Ireland by the Maxwell butcheries forced the hands of the Party, and on May 12th, Mr. Dillon made a strong appeal to the Prime Minister to stop the executions. He reminded him of all the Party had done to hold Ireland for England, and

declared that "thousands of people who ten days ago were bitterly opposed to the whole Sinn Féin movement, and to rebellion, were now becoming infuriated against the Government on account of these executions, and, as he was informed by letters received that morning, that feeling was spreading through the country in a most dangerous degree." His speech as a whole was humiliating for a patriotic Irishman, but he showed unwonted spirit in the remark—"It is not murderers who are being executed; it is insurgents who have fought a clean fight, a brave fight, however misguided, and it would be a damned good thing if your soldiers were able to put up as good a fight as did these men in Dublin—three thousand men against twenty thousand with machine guns and artillery." It may be remarked here that the total number of insurgents in Dublin certainly did not exceed 1,200.

A noteworthy correspondence took place at this time between General Maxwell and the aged Bishop of Limerick, the Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer. Maxwell wrote to the Bishop on May 6th to the following effect :—

" Headquarters, Irish Command,

" Park Gate, Dublin,

" 6th May, 1916.

" My Lord—I have the honour to request your Lordship's co-operation in a matter connected with the deplorable situation in Ireland, the settlement of which I am confident

you desire no less keenly than I do. There are two priests in your diocese, the Rev. Father Wall, C.C., of Drumcolloher, County Limerick, and the Rev. Father Hayes, C.C., of Newcastle West, County Limerick, whose presence in that neighbourhood I consider to be a dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm, and, had these priests been laymen, they would have already been placed under arrest. In this case I would be glad if your Lordship could obviate the necessity for such action by moving these priests to such employment as will deny their having intercourse with the people, and inform me of your decision. I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,

“ J. G. Maxwell,

“ General, Commander-in-Chief, the Forces
in Ireland.

“ The Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer,
“ Bishop of Limerick.”

There had been Irish bishops in the past who had proved only too amenable to such requests from the British authorities ; but Dr. O'Dwyer was made of sterner stuff. General Maxwell received the following curt reply :—

“ Abbey View, Kilmallock,

“ May 9, 1916.

“ Sir,—I am directed by the Bishop of Limerick to acknowledge the receipt on this

morning of your letter of the 6th inst., which has been forwarded to him at the above address. The Bishop desires to point out that the action which you suggest to him to take towards the Rev. Father Wall, and the Rev. Father Hayes, would be a very severe punishment, which the Bishop has no right to inflict on these priests, except on a definite charge supported by evidence. If, then, you are good enough to specify the ground on which you consider that their presence in the neighbourhood of Father Wall and Father Hayes is 'a dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm,' the Bishop will investigate the matter and inform you of his decision. But, whatever may be the rights of the military under martial law, a Bishop in the exercise of his authority has to follow the rules of ecclesiastical procedure. I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

" James Canon O'Shea,
" Pro-Secretary.

" To General Sir J. G. Maxwell,
" Commander-in-Chief, the
" Forces in Ireland."

Undeterred by this snub, General Maxwell returned to the charge. He quoted instances where the two priests concerned had publicly associated themselves with the Irish Volunteers in 1915, and proceeded:—

" When I wrote to your Lordship on the 6th I hoped that you would have been

able to prevent priests from mixing up in organisations that are a danger to the realm. If these reports be true, it should not be necessary for me to make definite charges, supported by evidence, against these priests who, I imagine, will not deny their participation in the Irish Volunteer movement, which has led to such deplorable events all over Ireland. Therefore, it should not be difficult for your Lordship, under such disciplinary power as you possess, to prevent, at any rate, priests from mixing up with and inciting their flock to join an organisation such as the Irish Volunteers have proved themselves to be. I beg to remain, my dear Lord Bishop, yours very truly,

“ J. G. Maxwell.

This letter from the military dictator drew from the aged Bishop the following spirited reply :—

“ Ashford, Charleville,

“ 17th May, 1916.

“ Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 12th inst., which has been forwarded to me here. I have read carefully your allegations against Rev. T. Wall and Rev. M. Hayes, but do not see in them any justification for disciplinary action on my part. They are both excellent priests, who hold strong national views, but I do not know that they have violated any law, civil or ecclesiastical. In your letter of 6th inst., you appeal to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as military

dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive. You remember the Jameson raid, when a number of buccaneers invaded a friendly state and fought the forces of the lawful government. If ever men deserved the supreme punishment it was they. But officially or unofficially the influence of the British Government was used to save them, and it succeeded. You took care that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The first information which we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood. Personally I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country. Then the deporting of hundreds, and even thousands, of poor fellows without a trial of any kind seems to me an abuse of power, as fatuous as it is arbitrary, and altogether your régime has been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovernment of this country. I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“ Edward Thomas,
“ Bishop of Limerick.”

This correspondence was subsequently published. At the time the country was still cowed and prostrate; but the national spirit rapidly revived, and soon it was clear that the

insurrection and the oppressive measures of the English had strengthened the separatist movement in Ireland, and that the people were losing faith in the Irish Parliamentary Party. The British Coalition Government decided to try putting the Home Rule Act into operation at once; but to overcome the opposition of Sir Edward Carson (then a member of the English Cabinet) and the Orange Party, it was necessary to consent to the exclusion of Ulster from the operation of the measure. This Mr. Redmond and his Party were prepared to agree to; a Convention of Ulster delegates, held in Belfast, agreed by 475 votes against 225 to the partition of Ireland; and at least one prominent Sinn Féiner, the Rev. Michael O'Flanagan, spoke in favour of partition; but the popular feeling against such a dismemberment, and the opposition of the Catholic Hierarchy, proved too strong, and the project was dropped. This fresh failure of Mr. Redmond helped to lessen further the already waning confidence of the Irish people in him.

The first rallying centre of national endeavour, after the defeat of Easter Week, was organisation to provide for the dependents of killed and imprisoned insurgents. Soon two organisations were in the field, the Irish National Aid Association, and the Irish Volunteer Dependents' Fund.* In August these were amalgamated into one association with the following declared objects:—

“ To make adequate provision for the families

* See Appendix F.

and dependents of the men who were executed, of those who fell in action, and of those who were sentenced to penal servitude in connection with the Insurrection of Easter, 1916, and in addition to provide for the necessities of those others who suffered by reason of participation, or suspicion of participation, in the Insurrection."

The offices of the new Association were at 10 Exchequer Street. A large sum of money was raised and administered. From the date of its establishment to its winding-up, the National Aid Association handled about £138,000.

The organisation at the time provided the only possible outlet for the energies of those who sympathised with the insurrection. There was a growing dissatisfaction with the Parliamentary Party; the term "Sinn Féin" had become popular; but the Sinn Féin organisation was without leaders or policy. Attempts to start new movements, an "Irish Nation League," and "Repeal League," failed to secure popular support. Those who had been attracted to the Separatist movement by the heroism and sacrifices of Easter Week waited for the jail gates to open for the authentic leaders and spokesmen of the movement.

Arthur Griffith was at this time interned in Reading Jail, from which he was only released early in 1917. It was known that he had been opposed to the Insurrection, and had taken no part in it; his views on subsequent developments were unknown. A member of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Colonel Arthur

Lynch, asked questions in the English House of Commons as to the imprisonment of Mr. Griffith, alleging that he had dissociated himself from the leaders of the Insurrection. These questions elicited from Griffith the following letter which was subsequently published :—

“ Reading Prison, England,

“ November 9th, 1916.

“ Sir,—I have just seen copies of questions you are reported to be putting in the British House of Commons concerning myself.

“ I gave to you, nor to any other member of that body, no authority to put questions concerning me in the British Parliament. Your action is reprehensible—your questions I regard as an insult in their suggestion that I dissociate myself in any way from the action of my brother-Irishmen, now dead or in prison, and in the suggestion of what you term compensation.

“ If it were possible to write more freely my opinion of your action, I should do so. As it is, I must only demand that you leave my name untouched by yourself or your colleagues while I am unable to speak or write to the Irish public.

Yours,

“ Arthur Griffith.

“ A. Lynch, Esq., M.P.”

Griffith was released about the same time as Michael Collins, and the other Frongoch prisoners, and shortly afterwards the weekly newspaper “ Nationality ” reappeared under his editorship.

After spending three weeks at home, Collins returned to Dublin, where he met a large number of his Frongoch associates, including most of the "forward" group, who had looked on him as a leader. The release of the Frongoch internees introduced a fresh and more vigorous element into the renascent national movement. Since Easter Week, whatever of the nucleus of a national movement existed was for the most part in the hands of persons whose "moderation" had secured them from the molestation of the English authorities. A number of the young men who had fought in Easter Week, and had played a big part in the passive resistance of Frongoch Camp, now began to take a share in the councils of the nation.

Michael Collins was still unknown to those who had escaped internment, but among the released prisoners he already carried weight. The younger men were eager for a "forward" policy, in the spirit of the new position created by the Insurrection. The Volunteers were quietly reorganised, and the re-establishment of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, started in Frongoch, was proceeded with. In both these tasks Collins played a leading part. His tireless energy alone would have brought him to the front, and his courage and self-confidence, his combination of youthful enthusiasm and practical clear-headed sagacity, already gave him an ascendancy over the young men with whom he was associated. He became a member of the Supreme Council of the reorganised Irish Republican Brotherhood.

Almost immediately after the arrival of Collins in Dublin events of importance occurred in the political world. On January 20th the Royal Dublin Society, at a meeting summoned for that purpose, formally expelled Count Plunkett from the membership of the Society by 236 votes to 58. Count Plunkett was the father of Joseph Plunkett, who had been executed as one of the leaders of the Easter Week Insurrection, and his two other sons, George and John, were serving sentences of penal servitude for taking part in the Insurrection; and the only reason for his expulsion was his supposed sympathy with the views of his sons. The action of the Royal Dublin Society created widespread indignation in Ireland.

An opportunity presented itself at this moment of testing public feeling on the matter, and, more important still, of testing public feeling on the Easter Week Insurrection. A vacancy for the Parliamentary seat of North Roscommon had arisen, and Count Plunkett announced his intention of going forward as a candidate against the official Irish Parliamentary candidate.

A very interesting problem arose from the Separatist point of view. The opponents of the Parliamentary Party had at the time no definite national policy to place before the country. They were composed of various elements, united only in dissatisfaction with the Party, and desire for a more "forward" movement. There were the survivors of Easter Week and their sympathisers in the country, who believed in upholding the ideal of absolute independence,

and had not abandoned all hope of a physical force policy ; there were the adherents of Arthur Griffith's old Sinn Féin organisation ; there were those opposed to Griffith's policy of abstention from attendance at the British Parliament, who believed what was wanted was to replace the Parliamentary Party by more virile and aggressive representatives ; there were those who voiced yet other views ; and a certain sprinkling of political adventurers.

The first group, among whom Collins was a leader, was confronted with a difficult problem. There were those who felt that, after the standard of an Irish Republic had been raised by the men of Easter Week, it would be a retrograde step for any of them or their supporters to take part in British Parliamentary elections, even in support of candidates pledged not to attend the English Parliament. Count Plunkett gave no pledge not to attend that Parliament. He put no programme of national policy before the country. He appealed altogether to popular sympathy.

It would be natural for a young man who was regarded as a leader of the physical force party to prefer to adopt an intransigent attitude ; but Collins had too much political sagacity not to realise the immense value, at that period, of an election result which would be at the same time a heavy blow to the still predominant Parliamentary Party, and a demonstration of popular sympathy with the Easter Week Insurrection. He threw all his energies into the support of Count Plunkett's candidature.

Arthur Griffith, for his part, made his attitude clear by the message :—" If Plunkett goes for Roscommon all Nationalists should support him." At the same time Griffith was not very enthusiastic over the candidate, who had no declared national policy, even on the matter of abstention, and whose past political record was, to say the least, ambiguous—a fact which the supporters of the Parliamentary Party did not fail to emphasise.

The candidate of the Parliamentary Party of North Roscommon was Mr. Devine. There was also another candidate, Mr. Jasper Tully, proprietor of a local newspaper, a former member of the Party, and now a bitter opponent of it.

The young men of Frongoch and their comrades who had escaped imprisonment threw themselves into the North Roscommon contest with ardour. All the progressive elements in the national movement rallied to the support of Count Plunkett. A spirited contest resulted in the victory of Count Plunkett, who secured no less than 3,022 votes as against 1,708 for Mr. Devine, and 687 for Mr. Tully.

The fact that no national policy of any kind was put before the electors by the Count was illustrated by the following leaflet distributed by his supporters in the constituency :—

" Why you should support Count Plunkett.

" 1. Because he is an Irishman and a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, the highest honour the Pope could confer on a layman. 2.

Because he is the man who stood shoulder to shoulder with Parnell and Davitt, whose fight against landlordism left every farmer in Ireland secure in his land. 3. Because he is the man who was recently insulted by the Royal Dublin Society—which is formed from the dregs of landlordism in Ireland—in their blind bigotry and lust for revenge. 4. Because he is the man who sacrificed his three sons in order that your son, and every Irish father's son, should be saved from the sacrifice. 5. Because he is an educated man, and a consistent Irishman, and will prove a worthy advocate of the wants of his people. 6. Because he will not associate with the Irishmen who cheered in Parliament when his son was shot against a wall for loving Ireland. Will you insult him in North Roscommon, as the Dublin Society did, and tell the British Government that he is not the man you want? No. There are Irishmen in North Roscommon yet."

It will be observed that no mention is made in this leaflet of the question whether Count Plunkett would attend the Westminster Parliament or not if elected. In fact his attitude on this question was still unknown, until his victory brought the problem to the front.

It was realised that the Party had received a staggering blow, and it was felt that the victory should be followed up. A meeting was held in Boyle, immediately after the election, to consider the inauguration of a new movement,

and it was only here that Count Plunkett made it entirely clear that he did not propose to attend the British Parliament. I am informed by persons present at this meeting that this explicit statement of the Count's intentions was only made at the conclusion of the meeting, after it had been made clear that the consensus of opinion was in favour of the abstention policy.

Collins's judgment on the matter was expressed in 1922 as follows :—

“Abstention from attendance at the British Parliament was the indispensable factor in the republican ideal—the repudiation of foreign government. But it was only after his election that the Count declared his intention not to go to Westminster, and the announcement was not received very enthusiastically by some of the most energetic of his supporters. They had returned a man, it was said, who did not intend to represent them anywhere. Not only the people, but even some who had been engaged in the Rising, hardly grasped the new teaching.

“This election and others which followed were not won on the policy of upholding a Republic, but on the challenge it made to the old Irish Party.

“There was at this stage no unity of opinion on the policy of abstention among the various elements which formed the opposition, which were joined together only on opposition to the Redmondites.”

There was, of course, another unifying factor

—the growing resentment of the Irish people with the policy of the English Government in Ireland. The Irish people had been taught by the Party to repose unconditional trust in the good faith of the English Government in the matter of Home Rule. It was now clear to all that the cause of Home Rule had been betrayed, and that this betrayal was due to the weakness, folly, and lack of patriotism of the Parliamentary Party. The formation of an English Coalition Government, with Sir Edward Carson, the late organiser of armed rebellion against Home Rule, in that Government, was a severe blow to Irish credulity. The fresh re-shuffling of the Coalition, with the elimination of most of the members pledged to Home Rule further increased the feeling of disillusionment. The cruelties of Maxwell in Ireland and the arrests and coercion that followed had strengthened the national resentment, and the overhanging dread that Ireland would be brought under the operation of the Military Service Act, was another important factor in the situation. It was felt that the Easter Week Insurrection had helped to postpone the danger of "Conscription." But councils of physical force were unpopular, and there was no general welcome for the policy of abstention from the English Parliament.

Collins returned to Dublin, where a new field for his activities presented itself. Early in February, owing to the resignation of Mr. Joseph MacGrath, it became necessary to appoint a paid secretary to the National Aid Association. Collins became a candidate for the job and the

"party" which he had created in Frongoch, canvassed actively for him, with the result that, though he was personally unknown to most members of the Committee, he secured the appointment at the trivial salary of £2 10s. a week.

It is amusing to record the remark made by one lady member of the Committee after her first interview with Collins. She declared she "was not very much impressed," adding—"He sat on a table dangling his legs and listening to all we had to say, without speaking a word himself."

Other members of the Committee were displeased with the boyish self-confidence of the young man, and his lack of respect for the pompous and pretentious. But all who valued good work efficiently done soon realised that the new secretary was a most important acquisition.

There had been a good deal of grumbling about the administration of the National Aid funds. It was alleged that many of those with greatest claims for relief and the greatest need of it were being neglected, while others whose claims and necessities were much slighter, or even in some cases non-existent, were in receipt of large sums of money. It is undesirable at the present time of day to express any opinion on such a matter. No doubt in the administration of such a fund it would be impossible to secure perfect equity, and, however equitably it was administered, there were bound to be complaints. It is certain, however, that these complaints became very much less frequent from the time

that Collins devoted himself to the work of the Association.

His work as Secretary of the Association had an important bearing on his after life. The work brought him into close contact with men and women from all over Ireland, who were adherents of the separatist cause, and the knowledge thus acquired was of great value to him in his later tasks. The administration of the National Aid funds was dealt with in a business-like and methodical way which gave general satisfaction.

It was at this time that Joe O'Reilly, his faithful adherent, returned to Dublin from his home at Bantry, and commenced that close association with Collins and his work which was to persist until the death of his chief.

The entry of the United States into the European War rendered the victory of the Allies certain; but it also rendered it probable that America would have a determining voice in the Peace Conference that must follow. In Ireland there was a feeling that the claims of the nation to freedom would find sympathetic advocacy in the United States; and the idea of Ireland appealing as a nation for her independence to the coming Peace Conference, began to dawn on men's minds as a leading item in the programme of the new movement.

On March 17th Count Plunkett addressed a letter to all popularly elected public boards, national organisations and prominent Nationalists throughout Ireland in which he declared that he had been elected "to recognise no foreign

authority over Ireland; to maintain the rights of Ireland to independence; and to initiate Ireland's work of taking control of her own affairs"; and that the duty had been cast upon him "of inaugurating a new policy for Ireland." After a long indictment of the policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the letter proceeded:

"The Irish Party have refused to make any claim for the representation of Ireland in the Peace Conference, and have allowed to go uncontradicted the statement of English Ministers that Ireland would not be represented in that Conference.

"Ireland has reclaimed her title to separate national existence. She should proceed at once to establish her own council and state her own case for recognition among the Nations. The world is looking forward to the assertion of National rights from the various peoples claiming independence. If the Nation fails to state such a claim, or fails to do it quickly, it will be considered as acquiescing in its dependence on another country. Also the terms in which the claims to national freedom are stated will be taken as defining the rights and aims of the particular nation.

"The claim of Ireland must be made as though Ireland were already a separate entity. No consideration of existing restrictions of national expression, no sufferance of the present interference with Irish liberty, no subservience to the prejudices or convenience of another power, should be allowed to mar the national

demand. We are a Nation ; we should be less than a Nation if we accepted or suggested terms that limited our Freedom.

" I have therefore decided to convene an Assembly of the representatives of the Administrative Bodies and National Organisations, and other public men of Ireland. The first of its duties will be to address itself to the Peace Conference with a view to obtaining the support of Nations which will be represented at that Conference. With its representative authority this Assembly will claim the recognition of the Sovereign Status of Ireland ; that Status to be guaranteed by the Continental Powers of Europe and by the United States of America.

" I ask your Council to give their adhesion to the principles and methods enunciated in this letter, and so, having expressed their approval, to appoint two of their members to take part as delegates in the Assembly to be held in the Mansion House, Dublin, at 11.30 a.m., on the 19th April."

The public boards of Ireland at this time were chiefly controlled by those who had been elected before the war as thick-and-thin supporters of the Parliamentary Party ; and Count Plunkett's invitation got a hostile reception from many of them. None the less a substantial number of these bodies accepted the invitation, and these, with delegates from Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, and other national organisations, formed a large and representative Convention which duly met at the Mansion House on April 19th.

At this gathering the divergence of opinions on a national policy speedily came to a head. Count Plunkett's idea was to scrap Sinn Féin and other national bodies, and start a new organisation, presumably with himself as leader. Griffith proposed the more practical policy, that all existing organisations, bodies and individuals should unite on the basis of abstention from the English Parliament and an appeal to the Peace Conference at the end of the war.

Plunkett was an unknown quantity, but he was the father of Joseph Plunkett, and those who admired the Easter Week Insurrection were still prejudiced against Griffith owing to his known opposition to that Insurrection. When Griffith proposed the formation of a Joint Executive, representing Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, Plunkett's followers, Labour and other interests, his motion was defeated. Thereupon he announced that the Sinn Féin organisation would continue on its former lines.

It was clear that a split was threatened at the very inception of the new movement, and steps were taken, by private conference, to prevent the threatened division. An agreement was come to on the lines of Griffith's defeated proposal—it was, in fact, the only practical policy. To quote Collins:—"At what was known as 'the Plunkett Convention,' an effort was made to get all the parts of the opposition united on such a policy (*i.e.*, abstention) but the divergence of opinion was so great that, to avoid a split, it was declared that there should be no greater union than a loose co-operation."

CHAPTER VIII.

The National Resurgence

April—October, 1917

AFTER the surrender of the Easter Week insurgents 122 of the surrendered men and one woman were sentenced to terms of penal servitude varying from three years to "life." The woman, Countess Markievicz, was imprisoned in Aylesbury Jail. The men, of whom I was one, were divided between the two principal English convict prisons, Portland and Dartmoor. They were subjected to the same inhuman and degrading conditions as the vilest of English criminals.

These men included most of the surviving leaders of the Easter Week Insurrection. There was also a number of men who had played a brave but very humble part in the fighting in Dublin, who had been selected for special punishment for no intelligible reason. There were also insurgents from Wexford, from Galway, and from Louth, and a few others.

Inexperienced in such matters, the men at first submitted patiently to conditions of imprisonment which were a disgrace to the Government responsible, even in the case of

criminals. Tom Clarke, O'Donovan Rossa, John Daly and other Irish patriots had to submit to even more inhuman conditions in convict prisons in the past. One degradation the 1916 men were spared: they were not compelled to associate with the ordinary convicts. This was not due to any humane compunction on the part of their jailers. It was due to fear of the Irishmen, who were regarded as dangerous persons, likely to spread a spirit of rebellion among their fellow-prisoners.

There were murmurings of revolt from an early stage, particularly among the Dartmoor prisoners. One of these, Eamonn De Valera, who had been Adjutant of the Dublin Brigade, and Commandant of the Third Battalion in the Insurrection, gave the prison authorities much trouble, with the result that he was transferred to Maidstone Prison with two others, Dr. Hayes and Desmond Fitzgerald, to keep him company.

The agitation which had arisen over the treatment of the prisoners, which resulted in the release of the Frongoch internees, had also the result of securing a few slight concessions for the "convicts." Early in December they were removed from Portland and Dartmoor to Lewes Prison, where minor ameliorations were introduced into their treatment, the principal ones being that they were allowed to converse while at exercise, and to engage in literary work. They still retained the convict garb, and were required to do the work of convicts.

Many of these prisoners were destined to play a big part in the struggle of succeeding years.

The senior surviving officers of the Dublin Brigade, in order of seniority, were De Valera, Tom Ashe, and Tom Hunter. Two leading I.R.B. men who had been in close touch with Tom Clarke in the arrangements for Easter Week were Diarmuid Lynch and Sean MacGarry. Other noteworthy men, from the point of view of our narrative, were Austin Stack (arrested in connection with the landing of Casement) Harry Boland (as yet only a rank-and-file man of the Dublin Brigade), E. J. Duggan (later one of the signatories of the Anglo-Irish Treaty) and Joseph MacGuinness, of whom we shall have much to say presently. Besides Duggan, there were five others destined to be members of the first Irish Free State Government—W. T. Cosgrave, Eoin MacNeill, J. J. Walsh, Desmond FitzGerald, and Fionán Lynch. Two other men, Liam Tobin and Frank Thornton, were destined to be two of Michael Collins's principal Intelligence officers and a third, Peadar Clancy, to play a leading part in carrying out Collins's daring plans.

The prisoners, finding themselves together in Lewes Jail under somewhat less rigorous conditions of imprisonment than before, commenced to organise themselves. Their first step was to elect a committee whose orders were to be obeyed. The working of this large committee, whose members were continually at variance with one another, gave general dissatisfaction. I was approached by several of my fellow-prisoners who pointed out to me that, as soldiers, what we wanted was not a committee

but a commandant, and urged me, as a senior officer, to take the matter up. I agreed with their contention, and suggested that, to avoid personal jealousies, we should hold no election but take the surviving officers of the Dublin Brigade in their seniority as our authorities. Eamonn De Valera was the senior officer, and next to him Ashe and Hunter, I proposed that De Valera should be accepted as Commandant and that Ashe and Hunter should be his Vice-Commandant and Adjutant. As the next officer in seniority outside the proposed appointments I felt I was the proper person to move in the matter.

I, therefore, approached De Valera during the exercise hour, and, stating that I spoke for a number of the Dublin men and, I believed, voiced the views of the majority of the prisoners, asked him to be Commandant, with Ashe and Hunter as his assistants. I could perceive at once that the proposed authority appealed to him; but he wished first to be satisfied that it was really the wish of the prisoners; and he also expressed a doubt whether Ashe would be a satisfactory man to work with. To satisfy him as to the former point, we went through the form of taking the votes of the prisoners on the proposed appointment. Of course the majority of the prisoners welcomed the prospect of a single authority in place of the janglings of a heterogeneous committee. It is to this trifling chain of events that the later emergence of De Valera as leader of the new Irish movement was primarily due.

The new Commandant was only a few days "in command" when a prisoner was sent to the punishment cell on bread and water for talking during work, whereupon all the prisoners, by De Valera's orders, refused to work. The Governor, in great perturbation, came to terms with the men, and released the prisoner from the punishment cell. A Government official later appeared on the scene, and announced drastic restrictions and penalties on the men. De Valera declared another "strike," and the official, after negotiations with De Valera, MacNeill and Duggan, surrendered, and we "carried on" as before. These victories strengthened the men's courage and discipline, and their confidence in their leader.

It was at this time, in the month of April, that a vacancy arose in the Parliamentary representation of Longford County, and the idea arose, at first locally, of putting up one of the Lewes prisoners, Joseph McGuinness, a native of Longford, whose brother Frank was a man of considerable local influence, as a candidate for the constituency. The project was taken up enthusiastically by the leaders of the new movement in Dublin, although it was a rather desperate undertaking, as the supporters of the Parliamentary Party were very strong in Longford, and the Party's candidate, Mr. Patrick McKenna, was very popular. Michael Collins despatched a messenger to Lewes to get into communication with McGuinness to ask him to consent to stand for the constituency.

Unfortunately the only means of communication

which presented itself was through the prison chaplain, a good and kindly man, but an ardent supporter of Mr. Redmond. The chaplain faithfully conveyed the message, but strove to influence MacGuinness to refuse on the spot. MacGuinness, though personally disposed to refuse, insisted on first consulting his colleagues. He held counsel with Duggan and myself first, and later with De Valera, Ashe, Diarmuid Lynch and Sean MacGarry. With the exception of Ashe, we all agreed that it would be inconsistent with his principles for him to become a candidate for the English Parliament. We felt that we symbolised uncompromising Separatism in the eyes of the people of Ireland, and MacGuinness's candidature would be regarded as a departure from that attitude. Ashe alone, of all the men consulted, saw the point of view of the people outside, and voiced it eloquently; but his arguments fell on deaf ears. All the others, including MacGuinness himself, agreed with De Valera, that it would be a mistake to consent to the candidature, and a message to this effect was sent to Dublin by MacGuinness.

The leaders of the new movement, confronted with this difficulty, took the bold step of ignoring the message, and going on with MacGuinness's candidature. It was a desperate gamble. The victory of MacGuinness was extremely doubtful and his defeat would be regarded as a vote of condemnation on the men of Easter Week. It was hoped, however, to enlist much popular sympathy with "the man in jail."

When we learned in Lewes that our friends outside were going on with MacGuinness's candidature, without his consent, there was nothing to do but to wait anxiously for the result. Sean MacGarry, it is true, held that MacGuinness should publicly repudiate his candidature, but we realised that, at all costs, a united front must be presented to our opponents. I think nobody but Ashe and Harry Boland approved of the candidature.

The Longford Election, was a historic one, but, as at Roscommon, no definite national policy was placed before the electors. All the Separatist elements, all the old Sinn Féiners, and many whose attitude was a purely negative one of opposition to the Irish Party, rallied to the support of the Lewes "convict." The Party candidate, Mr. Patrick McKenna, was personally popular and had even been in very friendly relations with Separatists in the past. It is recorded that Collins, and the young men associated with him, wished the election to be fought on a definite "Republican" ticket, but this point of view did not prevail. The supporters of MacGuinness relied chiefly on an appeal to popular sympathy with the prisoners. A poster was widely displayed in the constituency showing a man in convict garb with the inscription beneath:—"Put him in to get him out."

Collins and all the young men of the "Left Wing" worked strenuously in the election, which proved a very tough fight. Polling took place on the 9th of May. On the first count

MacKenna was declared elected by a small majority, but a bundle of uncounted votes was then discovered, and, on a recount, the result was—

Joseph MacGuinness	...	1,498
Patrick MacKenna	...	1,461
		<hr/>
Majority	...	37
		<hr/>

The result of the Longford Election was much more significant than that of Roscommon. The latter was a blow to the Parliamentary Party; the Longford result was a blow to the English Government. A man who had been a leader in an insurrection against English rule in Ireland, who had been condemned and treated as a criminal, was selected by an Irish constituency as their chosen representative. Whatever other issues were raised or not raised that was a fact which could not be ignored; and very embarrassing it was to England at this juncture. The situation of the Allies was a critical one, and the intervention of the United States in the war rendered the English Government sensitive to public opinion in a country where the Irish element exercised considerable influence. This demonstration of sympathy with the men of Easter Week, by a majority of electors, was a significant gesture to the world.

To delude public opinion abroad, Mr. Lloyd George determined on another "gesture." He announced that an "Irish Convention," representing all shades of Irish opinion, would be

held, and whatever that body recommended as a "settlement of the Irish problem" would be given effect to by his Majesty's Government. Amplifying his gesture, he announced that even Sinn Féin would be invited to send delegates to the "Convention."

The official Sinn Féin organisation, of which Arthur Griffith was President, made the astute reply that they would willingly attend a Convention if the delegates were elected by the people of Ireland, and there were no limitations to the findings of the Convention, which should be free to declare for absolute independence if it thought fit. Of course a Convention genuinely representative of the people of Ireland was the last thing Mr. Lloyd George desired. His sole object in proposing his precious "Convention" was to mislead public opinion abroad, to silence the criticism evoked by the executions, imprisonments, and coercion in Ireland, and stave off immediate embarrassment. His so-called "Convention" was one whose constitution was determined, and the majority of whose members were appointed by the English Government.

There had been a growing feeling among the Lewes prisoners that they were acting wrongly in acquiescing in being treated as criminals, and that they should insist on being regarded and treated as prisoners of war, like the Frongoch internees. De Valera now decided to start a revolt against convict conditions. On Whit Monday, May 28th, he served a notice on the prison authorities that from that date the men

would do no work save what was necessary for their own personal services, and would submit to no conditions which were not consistent with the status of prisoners of war. The men went quietly back to their cells by De Valera's orders ; they had all received instructions what to do when isolated.

We were kept confined to our cells throughout the week. We were offered to be allowed to exercise in small batches, in silence, under convict conditions, but no man would avail of the offer. De Valera now sent word round that when we were let out to go to Mass on Sunday we should refuse to go back to our cells, and should hold the prison, and compel them to call out the military. Unfortunately one careless, rather witless, prisoner dropped a paper containing this order, and it was found by the prison authorities and produced a panic. We were not allowed to Mass on Sunday ; and on the following week De Valera, Duggan, Ashe and other men who were regarded as ringleaders (including me) were removed in chains to other prisons. Here an attempt was made to induce us to accept convict conditions, and associate with ordinary criminals, but we kept up our resistance, and some prisoners went on hunger strike.

These events, coming at the time they did, were very embarrassing to the British Government. When Lloyd George decided to play to the gallery abroad by summoning an "Irish Convention," he probably realised that in order to complete the picture it would be necessary

to release the prisoners of the 1916 Insurrection. But the "mutiny" of these prisoners spoiled the chance of a grand gesture, and made it impossible to release them without the appearance of a humiliating surrender. Meanwhile the agitation in Ireland over the conditions of the Lewes prisoners grew to mighty dimensions. On June 10th a public meeting was summoned in Beresford Place, in Dublin, to protest against the treatment of the prisoners. The meeting was "proclaimed" by the English authorities, but a huge crowd assembled in the Place, to be addressed by Count Plunkett and Cathal Brugha. When the police attempted to break up the gathering Inspector Mills was mortally injured by a blow from a camán. Cathal Brugha and the Count were arrested and kept in custody until the Amnesty.

The English Government realised that all these proceedings were out of keeping with the grand gesture with which they hoped to delude public opinion in America. There was nothing for it but to make the best of a humiliating situation. On June 15th Mr. Bonar Law announced that all the prisoners of the 1916 Insurrection would be released unconditionally and immediately, "with a view to creating a favourable atmosphere for the Irish Convention."

Three days later the prisoners arrived in Dublin, and received a tremendous popular ovation. They drove in brakes through the streets which were packed with cheering crowds. Little over a year ago they had been marched prisoners through these streets to the boats

amid silence or hostile demonstrations. To-day they were received as heroes, and leaders of the people of Dublin. It was an occasion to stir deep emotions.

De Valera, as the leader of the prisoners, was the hero of the hour. He had been hitherto unknown in political life, and his name was unfamiliar outside the Gaelic League and the Dublin Volunteers. His successful leadership in prison, as well as the fame of his exploits in Easter Week, had brought him prominently into notice, but he had as yet no political experience, and no definitely formed views on Irish politics. It was only in Lewes that he first began to study what is called "the Irish problem" closely, and in the endless prison discussions he showed that his mind was still in a state of flux. In these discussions he was inclined to treat an independent Republic as an unattainable ideal and to regard what was called "Dominion Home Rule" as a fairly satisfactory compromise. At the same time he insisted that the full demand should be made in all national pronouncements.

He arrived in Dublin the accepted leader of the men of Easter Week. An event occurred immediately which helped to increase his prestige. Major William Redmond, M.P., brother of Mr. John Redmond, had been killed in action in France. His death created a vacancy for his constituency of East Clare, and De Valera had barely set foot on the Irish boat at Holyhead when he was approached and asked to stand as candidate for that constituency. He was

at first averse to standing, but after some consideration decided to contest the seat. The whole strength of the new movement, reinforced by the released prisoners, was thrown into the election campaign in East Clare.

The Irish Party's nominee, Mr. P. J. Lynch, was regarded as a strong candidate, and it was believed that the contest, like that of Longford, would be a close one ; but the result astonished even the most sanguine supporters of De Valera, who won by the huge majority of 5,010 votes to 2,035 for Lynch. It was a triumph of enthusiasm. No definite policy was put forward before the Clare people. They were asked to vote for the man who had fought for Irish independence, and suffered in British prisons, and thereby show the nations of the world, and the coming Peace Conference, that they endorsed Ireland's claim to independence. It was made clear that Mr. De Valera would not attend the English Parliament if elected ; but he issued no election address.

One important feature of the East Clare election was the reappearance of the Volunteers in public for the first time since Easter Week, 1916. During the various meetings and demonstrations of the election campaign the Clare Volunteers, armed only with sticks, kept order, and restrained mob violence, and their disciplined efficiency greatly impressed the public.

Michael Collins did not take part in the East Clare Election. His hands were too full in Dublin. The work of the National Aid Association, already exacting enough, was

rendered still more so by the sudden release of 122 men, most of whom had to be provided for. In addition to this the releases introduced new elements into the other work in which he had been engaged. As has been said the new national movement was nominally controlled by a provisional body representative of Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, and other elements. Of this body Collins was a member; but it was clear that the release of so many former leaders would necessitate new arrangements.

The I.R.B. decided to revise their Constitution, and a Committee for that purpose was appointed consisting of Diarmuid Lynch, Tom Ashe and Con. Collins. The greater part of the work was done by Lynch and Michael Collins. Lynch records that he was "amazed and delighted with Michael Collins's capacity for work."

It was at this time that Collins transferred his offices from Exchequer Street to 32 Bachelor's Walk. After he had severed connection with the National Aid Association in the following year, he continued to use the premises in Bachelor's Walk as one of his offices right up to the time of the Truce.

In this place Collins, while occupying himself strenuously with the work of the National Aid Association, was able to devote much of his wonderful energy to the work of the Volunteers and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. De Valera had joined the old I.R.B. shortly before the Easter Week Insurrection, but he declined to have anything to do with the reorganised Brotherhood, giving as a reason the condemnation

of secret societies by the Catholic Hierarchy. Another man who had formerly been a stalwart of the I.R.B., Cathal Brugha, had now become a bitter opponent of that body. After the Easter Week Insurrection he objected to any attempt to revive the secret organisation, maintaining that it had outlived its usefulness.

It was at this period that Collins and his more intimate associates commenced to make a rendezvous of Vaughan's Hotel, a place which will figure largely in the subsequent narrative. Vaughan's Hotel, at this time owned by a Clare lady, named Mrs. Vaughan, was situated on the "quiet" side of Parnell Square, away from the traffic, and had the advantage of an unobtrusive situation. It was a conveniently unobtrusive place to meet friends, either for business or social intercourse. Arthur Griffith was a not infrequent visitor here at this period, accompanied by Sean Milroy, Michael Noyk, and others of his favourite companions. Griffith was not yet familiar with Collins. The most frequent companions of Collins at this time were Diarmuid Lynch, Harry Boland, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Fionán Lynch and I.

Harry Boland had been an active member of the I.R.B., the Volunteers, Sinn Féin, and the Gaelic Athletic Association, but had never risen above the rank and file in any political or military organisation prior to 1916. In prison and afterwards, however, his daring spirit, pugnacity, energy and enthusiasm began to bring him to the front. He was a hard worker, a stubborn fighter, warm-hearted, generous,

unselfish, sociable, intensely human ; in many respects a man after Collins's own heart, and having much in common with him. He lacked, however, the judgment and sagacity that lay at the back of Collins's fiery energy and impetuous manners. Harry Boland was rash, hot-headed, prone to act on impulse, easily swayed by emotion ; but in this period the qualities of energy, aggressiveness and daring, in which he excelled, counted for most. His friendship with Collins had already begun ; but it was not until the following year that it ripened into an ardent attachment.

The victory of East Clare was followed, a month later, by the triumph of Mr. William T. Cosgrave, another Easter Week man, at Kilkenny, where he defeated Mr. Magennis, the Parliamentary Party's candidate by 772 votes to 392. At this time Mr. Laurence Ginnell, M.P., announced his intention of abandoning further attendance at the English Parliament. Mr. Ginnell, who had long ago broken away from the Irish Party, had been the only Irish member to raise a voice of protest on the day when the English Prime Minister announced the first executions of Easter Week insurgents. He had supported Count Plunkett in the Roscommon Election, and his conversion to the policy of abstention from Westminster was naturally not unexpected.

In the meanwhile Mr. Lloyd George's hand-picked " Irish Convention " met and went on meeting at various centres, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, amid public indifference or derision. The

proceedings of this august assembly have too little bearing on history to be worth chronicling. The "Convention," as I have said, was never intended seriously by the English Government for any purpose save to hoodwink public opinion in America ; although no doubt there were some well-meaning members of it who believed otherwise.

Meanwhile the promoters of the new movement, popularly called "Sinn Féin," carried on a intensive propaganda throughout the country. The release of the prisoners was celebrated everywhere, concerts and demonstrations were held in every part of the country at which leading Sinn Feiners expounded their point of view. The main point insisted upon was the necessity of refusing to recognise the English Parliament by sending representatives there, and of placing Ireland's claim of independence before the Peace Conference at the end of the war. The old Sinn Féin doctrine of self-reliance, of building the country up by united effort, and making it economically and culturally independent, was also preached ; but this was something above the heads of the multitude, who were chiefly impressed by the heroism and sacrifices of the Easter Week men, dissatisfaction with the Irish Party, and the dread of conscription.

The lead given by the Clare Volunteers was followed throughout the country. At every Sinn Féin meeting or demonstration Volunteers paraded and went through military evolutions, though not carrying arms. The English Government endeavoured to prevent this by

arrests and proclamations ; but this victimisation only helped to strengthen the movement. To spirited young men the risk of arrest added an enticing spice of danger to the excitement of volunteering.

In August Thomas Ashe, Austin Stack, and Fionán Lynch were arrested and tried by court-martial on the charge of making speeches calculated to cause disaffection. A number of Volunteer officers were also arrested on the charge of illegal drilling. It had now become the practice of Volunteers or Sinn Feiners, when charged before an English court, whether military or civil, to refuse to plead or to recognise the right of their captors to try them. In this case Thomas Ashe was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, Lynch to eighteen months and Stack to two years.

The three leaders were imprisoned in Mountjoy Prison with about 40 others. And now the fight which had been started in Lewes was renewed. The prison authorities endeavoured to subject the men to the same treatment as criminals. They resisted and asserted their right to be treated as prisoners of war, or, at least, as political prisoners. The English authorities, with stubborn obtuseness, persisted in the attempt to classify these men with thieves and murderers ; and, all other means of protest having failed, the prisoners went on hunger strike on September 20th. Austin Stack was their elected leader.

The prison authorities, confronted with this revolt, resorted to the cruel device of forcible

feeding. The hunger strike, and the circumstances that had given rise to it, stirred public feeling in Ireland profoundly. Even those who had no sympathy with Sinn Féin, sympathised with the men's demand to be treated as political prisoners. A huge meeting of protest in Dublin was followed by similar meetings all over the country, and there were daily demonstrations outside Mountjoy Prison.

On the 25th of September, after five days of hunger strike, Thomas Ashe was removed to the Mater Hospital in a sinking condition, and he died a few hours later. The death of this brave and gifted young man thrilled the Irish people with grief and indignation. Thomas Ashe, or more correctly Tomás Aghas, was a man of exceptional talents who, had he been spared, would have surely played a prominent part in the subsequent history of Ireland. He was a handsome young man of lofty stature and magnificent physique, a native Irish speaker from the Dingle peninsula of Kerry, who, before the Insurrection, had been a National teacher in Lusk, Co. Dublin, and had commanded the Fifth Battalion in the victorious fight at Ashbourne. Among the Lewes prisoners he had been next in command to De Valera, with whom, as already hinted, he had often been at variance. He was, it is interesting to add, one of the first to recognise the great qualities of Michael Collins. His death, under such pathetic circumstances, was an event which profoundly moved the people of Ireland.

It is estimated that thirty thousand persons

visited the Mater Hospital where his body lay in state, clad in Volunteer uniform, and surrounded by a guard of honour of Volunteers. His funeral was in the nature of a national demonstration of mourning. Contingents representing public bodies and national organisations attended from all parts of Ireland; the Volunteers of the Dublin Brigade marched in the funeral procession, and the streets were thronged with mourning and reverent crowds.

Tomás Aghas had been one of the leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and the Brotherhood, under the disguise of the "Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee," took charge of the funeral arrangements. It was anticipated that there would be an oration at the graveside, but no announcement had been made. Tomás Aghas was accorded military honours. Three volleys were fired over his grave, and the "Last Post" was sounded. Then Michael Collins, standing at the head of the grave in the uniform of a Vice-Commandant of Volunteers (the rank he then held), uttered a couple of sentences in Irish and English. The Irish words are not recorded, but the English words were:—

"Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian."

The death of Ashe resulted in the victory of the hunger strikers. Two days later the English authorities in Ireland conceded the claims of

the prisoners, and a new series of rules for the treatment of "political prisoners" was introduced. The men then desisted from their hunger strike.

An inquest was held on the body of Ashe which lasted over three weeks and attracted great public interest. Mr. Timothy Healy appeared on behalf of the prisoners, several of whom, including Stack and Lynch, were called in evidence. The jury requested that the Chief Secretary and Under Secretary for Ireland should be called as witnesses, but they pleaded privilege and declined to attend. The evidence offered is fairly summarised in the jury's verdict on November 1st :—

"We find that Thomas Ashe, according to the medical evidence of Professor McWeeney, Sir Arthur Chance, and Sir Thomas Myles, died of heart failure and congestion of the lungs on 25th September, caused by the punishment of taking away from his cell the bed, bedding, and boots, and his being left to lie on the cold floor for fifty hours, and then subjected to forcible feeding in his weak condition after a hunger-strike of five or six days.

"We censure the Castle authorities for not acting more promptly, especially when the grave condition of the deceased and other prisoners was brought under their notice on the previous Saturday by the Lord Mayor and Sir J. Irwin.

"That the hunger strike was adopted against the inhuman punishment inflicted, and as a protest against the men being treated as

criminals, and demanding to be treated as political prisoners in the first division.

“ We condemn forcible or mechanical feeding as an inhuman and dangerous operation, which should be discontinued.

“ That the assistant doctor called in, having no previous practice in such operations, administered unskilfully forcible feeding.

“ That the taking away of deceased's bed, bedding and boots, was an unfeeling and barbarous act, and we censure the Deputy-Governor for violating the prison rules and inflicting punishment which he had no right to do, but we infer he was acting under instructions from the Prison Board at the Castle, which refused to give evidence and documents asked for.

“ We tender our sympathy to the relatives in this sad and tragic occurrence.”

Stack, Lynch and the other prisoners were removed to Dundalk about this time. Here fresh complaints led to another hunger-strike, as a result of which all the prisoners were released on November 17th.

CHAPTER IX.

The "German Plot"

October 1917—May 1918

THE national movement, which had arisen out of the ashes of Easter Week, had now begun to take definite shape. I have emphasised the vagueness and indefiniteness of its early stages, because this matter has been the subject of later misrepresentation for propagandist purposes. The one tangible result that had emerged so far was that the majority of the Irish people, moved by the heroism and sacrifices of the Easter Week insurgents, moved also by dissatisfaction with the Irish Party, by resentment of the English Government's betrayal of Home Rule and the coercion of Ireland, and by fear of military conscription, had rallied to the support of those who stood for Irish independence. The only practical policy put forward so far was non-recognition of and passive resistance to English rule in Ireland, and an appeal to the Peace Conference which was anticipated at the end of the war.

The basis of the new movement was, then, the assertion of Ireland's separate nationality and of her right to independence. Its programme

was a refusal to recognise the English Government or its agents in Ireland, the abstention of the elected representatives of the people from attendance at the English Parliament, the establishment of a National Assembly of elected representatives, passive resistance to British powers and institutions, the revival and use of the Irish language, the encouragement of Irish industries, the maintenance of the Irish Volunteers, and an appeal by Ireland's National Assembly to the Peace Conference.

It will be seen that, except for the last two items, this was simply Arthur Griffith's old Sinn Fein policy. It was in fact a continuation of the old Irish Ireland movement of which Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers, and the Gaelic League were different facets.

The methods proposed were perfectly peaceful. Nobody at the time contemplated another insurrection. Even the Irish Volunteers only considered physical force as a last resort, in case the English Government introduced conscription in Ireland. Passive resistance only was advocated, and for a long time afterwards was alone resorted to. It was the continued violence of the English Government that ultimately forced a peaceful and constructive movement into a bloody revolutionary war.

In the new movement there were, as I have hinted, divided counsels. Most of the old Sinn Fein element was attached by personal loyalty to Griffith, the father of the movement; there was also an element which supported him as a "moderate," not likely to lead them into extreme

courses, owing to his attitude to the Easter Week Insurrection. These constituted a "right wing." There was also a "left wing," of which Collins and Diarmuid Lynch might be regarded as leaders. But even the left wing did not contemplate another rising. They only desired more root and branch aggressive resistance to British rule.

The Annual Convention, or Ard-Fheis, had been fixed for October 25th, and this gathering was looked forward to by the country as a national assembly to formulate the new policy. Arthur Griffith had been President of Sinn Fein for many years. On this occasion Eamonn De Valera was also named as candidate for the Presidency. Collins and the left wing supported De Valera's candidature. Griffith's opposition to the Easter Week Insurrection was their main objection against him. Comparatively little was known of De Valera, but it was thought that, as a younger man, and one of the fighting men of Easter Week, he was more likely to favour aggressive action, and, anyway, was a more fitting symbol of the resurgent, rebellious Young Ireland.

The organisation of the I.R.B. was employed in canvassing for De Valera, while the personal adherents of Griffith and all the "moderate" element canvassed for the latter. The result of the election seemed exceedingly doubtful, and there were those who looked forward with dismay to the possibility of a split.

Count Plunkett had also allowed himself to be nominated for the Presidency.

There was a huge attendance at the Ard-Fheis, which met in the Mansion House on October 25th, under the Presidency of Mr. Griffith, over 1,200 clubs being represented, and the public waited the result with tense interest. The election of a President was an early item on the agenda. When this matter came before the assembly Arthur Griffith rose and declared that he wished to retire in favour of De Valera, adding—"In Eamonn De Valera we have a soldier and a statesman."

His statement was greeted with applause. Count Plunkett, thereupon, also withdrew his candidature.*

Griffith's unselfish patriotism on this occasion has never received proper acknowledgment. For many years he had toiled in poverty and obscurity, giving the best work of his brain to the cause of Ireland. His ideas had prevailed, and at the very time when he saw the country converted to the Sinn Féin policy, of which he was the pioneer, he surrendered the leadership to a new, almost unknown, man, in order to avoid any cleavage in the national ranks. His self-abnegation will be the more appreciated when it is pointed out that in the case of a contest he would certainly have defeated De Valera, as was proved by the results of the election of an Executive Council, when Griffith's supporters headed the poll and the I.R.B. candidates were either defeated or came in at the foot of the list.

* See Appendix G.

From that day till the moment when De Valera resigned the Presidency of Dáil Eireann, Griffith gave him the most loyal and ungrudging support, and in public and in private showed the kindest feelings to him.

Arthur Griffith was elected Vice-President by the almost unanimous vote of 1,197. The other candidates were Father Michael O'Flanagan and Count Plunkett, and the former was elected as second Vice-President by 780 votes.

Austin Stack was elected Honorary Secretary jointly with Darrell Figgis. Stack was at the time a prisoner in Mountjoy, and the election of the leader of the late hunger-strike was intended chiefly as a gesture of protest. Very little was known of Stack outside Kerry.

The Honorary Treasurers elected were Messrs. William T. Cosgrave and Laurence Ginnell. Of the twenty-four persons elected to the Executive Council (of whom I was one) Ernest Blythe and Michael Collins were at the bottom of the list with 340 votes each. Harry Boland and Diarmuid Lynch were also elected members of the Executive.

Apart from the elections of officers and Executive, the most important transaction of the Convention was a decision to contest all seats in the next General Election, and of the Sinn Fein members so elected to constitute a National Assembly, to be known as Dáil Eireann.

On being elected President, Mr. De Valera took the chair, and even his greatest admirers had to admit that he made a very bad chairman.

He was intensely verbose, wasting a great amount of time on elaborate explanations of the simplest points, with many repetitions, speaking in the tone of a schoolmaster to children. He commented on and explained every motion, speech or utterance of every delegate. He was so far conscious of his limitations that, while discussing certain motions in which he was specially interested, he insisted on Griffith taking the chair.

It was on this occasion, in his Presidential address, that Mr. De Valera first used the significant and oft-quoted phrase: "We are not doctrinaire Republicans."

The Sinn Fein Convention, which lasted two days, and was open to the Press, was succeeded on the third day by a secret Convention of the Irish Volunteers, which was held in the buildings of the Gaelic Athletic Association's grounds at Jones's Road. Several hundred delegates from the reorganised Volunteers attended this Convention, at which Mr. De Valera was elected President of the Volunteers. It should be noted that the Volunteers still remained an autonomous body entirely independent of Sinn Fein. This 1917 Convention was the last Convention of Volunteers ever held until a sectional Convention was held in 1922 after the "split."

The Volunteers so far had no programme beyond the purely defensive programme of the old Volunteers, but the important decision was taken of empowering the Executive to "declare war" if it was thought necessary—it being

understood that this power was needed in case the English Government attempted to enforce military conscription in Ireland.

In the Sinn Fein Convention the I.R.B. influence had not been very powerful, but in the reorganised Volunteers it was predominant. Michael Collins and Diarmuid Lynch were placed on the Executive by large majorities, and most of the Dublin Executive were also members of the secret organisation. Another I.R.B. leader, Sean MacGarry, was elected General Secretary.

Cathal Brugha, as mentioned before, had now become a bitter opponent of the I.R.B., which did not prevent his being elected Chief of Staff of the Volunteers. Diarmuid Lynch became Director of Communications, and Michael Collins Director of Organisation.

Besides the "Resident Executive" there was a General Executive, including representatives from the country, and it is interesting to mention that the General Executive of the Volunteers at this period included Catholic clergymen. The General Executive hardly exercised any control on the organisation, and never met after 1919.

The following reminiscence of this period by Diarmuid Lynch, a man with an American business training, is interesting:—

"A new Constitution had to be drafted for the Volunteers. Michael Collins did nine-tenths of the work of drafting this Constitution, and very few changes were made in the draft as submitted by him.

"It was a joy to watch Collins at his work. He was most methodical in everything; had an extraordinary aptitude for detail; always knew exactly what he wanted to do, and disposed of each particular task without a moment's hesitation.

"I was closely associated with the activities of the Easter Week leaders, and though I had the greatest admiration for those men, not one of them, in my opinion, could compare with Michael Collins in getting work done expeditiously and thoroughly. It is my belief that were it not for the ability, foresight, courage and driving force of this remarkable man the fight against the Black-and-Tans could not have been successfully initiated, and certainly could not have been carried through so magnificently."

Speaking of the same period, another comrade of Collins remarked:—"There was a good deal of adverse comment on him by sedate, easy-going people, just because he insisted on their working and stood for no inefficiency. Some vain, pretentious men, who were slack in the performance of duties they had undertaken, were greatly hurt at the brusque comments of the energetic young man. It was one such person who, meaning to be scornful, called him 'a young man in a hurry.'"

When the drafting of the Constitution of the Volunteers was completed Collins devoted his attention to organisation, and drafted a scheme which formed the basis of organisation of the Volunteers of later and more warlike times.

Shortly after this the Dundalk prisoners were released, as already mentioned. Austin Stack



MICHAEL COLLINS AND HARRY BOLAND ON THE HURLING FIELD.

took up the duties of Honorary Secretary of Sinn Fein jointly with Darrell Figgis. Stack was also a member of the I.R.B.

At the Sinn Fein Convention Mr. De Valera had been the I.R.B. candidate as against Griffith, but he declined to rejoin the secret organisation, of which he had been a member for a brief period before the Easter Week Insurrection; and there were those of us who dreaded the possibility of a later clash between De Valera and the I.R.B. Joseph MacGuinness induced De Valera to hold a private conference on the subject with himself, Eamonn Duggan, Fionán Lynch, and me. MacGuinness was not a member of the organisation, but the other three of us were. We urged De Valera to join the I.R.B., but he declined, alleging that it was contrary to his religious principles. He mentioned, however, that he suspected that Diarmuid Lynch was using his position as Director of Communications to organise I.R.B. channels of communication, and that Collins was "organising more than the Volunteers."

The months that followed the Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis up to April, 1918, were peculiarly devoid of events of political significance. The so-called "Irish Convention" continued to meet, but the course of its deliberations was not made public, and the people generally took no interest in its proceedings. Meetings, lectures and demonstrations in support of Sinn Fein were held all over the country, and attracted widespread popular support. The "Irish Ireland" ideal and the right of Ireland to

independence were preached, but the speakers had no immediate policy to put before the people beyond the prospect of an "appeal to the Peace Conference" at the end of the war. It was at this time that Sinn Fein sustained its first reverse since 1916, being defeated in three successive by-elections. But the blunders of the English Government were destined to secure the triumph of Sinn Fein.

In January a vacancy occurred in the Northern constituency of South Armagh, where the great majority of the people were Catholics, and had previously returned a member of the Irish Party as their representative. Mr. Donnelly was the Irish Party's candidate on this occasion, and there was also a Unionist candidate named Richardson. It was decided to nominate Dr. MacCartan, who was then in America and regarded in the light of an envoy of ours, as the Sinn Fein candidate for South Armagh. All the forces of the Sinn Fein organisation were thrown into the contest. The Unionist retired in favour of the Irish Party candidate—a significant fact. Sinn Fein speakers flooded the constituency. They were howled down everywhere by the "Hibernians" (or, as they were popularly called, "Molly Maguires"), and in many cases mob violence was resorted to against them. To meet this, companies of Volunteers were brought up from Clare. The majority of the Ulster Catholics were still untouched by the national movement, which had taken such a grip of the rest of Ireland. They remained deaf to all argument, taking

their orders from the sectarian-political Party organisation to which they belonged. The result was a crushing defeat for Sinn Fein. At the election, which took place on February 1st, 1918, Mr. Donnelly won by 2,324 votes to 1,305 for Dr. MacCartan.

Mr. John Redmond died on March 6th, and Mr. John Dillon was elected Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party in his place. His death created a vacancy in Waterford, where the Redmond family was immensely popular, particularly with the famous cattle-dealers of Ballybricken. The Irish Party selected Captain Redmond, son of the late leader, as their candidate. Sinn Fein opposed to him a local man, popular and highly respected, Dr. Vincent White. Once again Sinn Fein sustained a bad beating. Captain Redmond won by 1,242 votes to 764 for Dr. White. In this election Sinn Feiners had again to contend against mob violence, for which the "Ballybricken boys" were notorious.

This election, which took place on the 22nd March, was succeeded twelve days later by an election in another Northern constituency, East Tyrone, where the Party candidate, Mr. Harbinson, defeated Mr. Sean Milroy, by 1,802 votes to 1,222.

Sinn Fein suffered badly from the lack of a practical policy, apart from the contesting of by-elections. It was part of our declared policy to inaugurate schemes of national reconstruction under the authority of a National Assembly, but until there was a General Election it was

not possible to call such a National Assembly into existence; and meanwhile a political organisation like Sinn Féin could hardly fill its place or exert the same authority. It was decided at the Ard-Fheis to divide the various activities of the new movement into "departments," and to make members of the Executive "directors" of different departments. This was done; but none of the many departments created was placed under the charge of Michael Collins.

Meanwhile Collins pursued his activities in his office in 32 Bachelor's Walk, and in particular the work of organising, arming and strengthening the Irish Volunteers went on apace. There were many new recruits throughout the country. The possibility of an attempt by the English Government to enforce military conscription in Ireland helped to swell our military ranks. The policy of open drilling and parading was persisted in, and many Volunteers were arrested and tried by court martial on charges arising out of this. The practice of refusing to recognise or plead to an English tribunal, whether civil or military, had now become general.

The English Government's proclamations, arrests, and other forms of coercion were of great assistance to Sinn Féin. They helped to strengthen popular sympathy, and to create a united front in face of the enemy. They also helped to save Sinn Féin from the embarrassments of framing and putting into execution a practical constructive policy.

Diarmuid Lynch, who was appointed "Food Director" on the Sinn Fein Executive, became seriously perturbed over the excessive export of live stock and farm produce from Ireland, which threatened to produce a food shortage. To call attention to the danger, he had a drove of pigs seized by force on their way to the North Wall. The animals were killed and sold to local pork-butchers, and the proceeds were handed over to the owners of the pigs. For this action Diarmuid Lynch was seized by the British authorities and imprisoned in Dundalk Jail, being later deported to the United States, of which he was a citizen. He was married while in jail under romantic circumstances.

When notified of his proposed deportation he asked to be allowed to marry in jail before leaving Ireland, to avoid the delays and difficulties which his fiancée would incur in getting a passport to America during those days of war. Permission was refused, but a means was found of outwitting the prison authorities.

Diarmuid's fiancée Miss Kathleen Quinn, accompanied by her sister and a priest, paid a visit to the prison to see him and two other prisoners—Michael Brennan, now Adjutant General of the Free State Army, and Frank Henderson. Under the guise of this visit, the marriage ceremony was performed, Brennan acting as "best man," while Henderson stood on guard to prevent interference.

This event caused consternation and anger to the English authorities. That evening Lynch was removed from Dundalk to Dublin, for

deportation. His wife and her friends travelled by the same train and accompanied him to the Bridewell. News of the affair had already reached Dublin, and when Lynch arrived at Amiens Street Station he was met by a huge cheering crowd. Collins met him at the Bridewell and spent a long time with him discussing methods of communication between America and Ireland. Diarmuid's wife accompanied him to Liverpool, where she was arrested and detained, but after some weeks she was able to rejoin her husband in New York.

On April 3rd Michael Collins was arrested outside his office in Bachelor's Walk by a number of detectives of the political section of the "G" Division, a body with which he was destined to have much to do at a later date. He endeavoured to resist, and a number of other policemen came to the rescue. A crowd gathered and hooted the police, and some men endeavoured to rescue him, but the police succeeded in keeping their prisoner and dragging him to Brunswick Street Police Station. The crowd remained outside the Police Station for some time, but eventually dispersed. Collins was not known to them, but the arrest of a Sinn Féiner was resented by the Dublin populace.

Collins was brought under escort to Granard, where he was tried by a civil court on a charge of making a speech calculated to cause disaffection at Legga, near Granard. He was ordered to find bail. He refused to do so and was sentenced to a short term of imprisonment.

Shortly after this Fionán Lynch and Austin

Stack were re-arrested to serve the terms of eighteen months and two years' imprisonment respectively from which they had been released when on hunger strike. I was also arrested and sentenced to four months' imprisonment in lieu of bail for a speech delivered in Killarney.

It was at this moment that Mr. Lloyd George announced that the English Government intended to apply compulsory military service to Ireland. This announcement came as a stunning blow to the already discredited Irish Party. They protested, but in vain. On April 9th Mr. Lloyd George introduced his Man-Power Bill, and on April 16th it passed its third reading by 301 votes to 103 against, the minority being chiefly composed of members of the Irish Party. The Party found themselves compelled, as the only adequate protest, to resort to that very Sinn Fein policy of abstention which they had deprecated and derided. On the passage of the Conscription Bill Mr. Dillon and his followers left the House of Commons and returned to Ireland, and three days later, at a meeting of the Party held in the Mansion House, they unanimously decided "to abandon attendance at Westminster and assist the people at home in their fight against Conscription."

It is improbable that the English Government had the faintest conception of the intensity of the opposition to Conscription in Ireland, or of the effect their action would have on the Irish people. They were more concerned with crushing Sinn Fein, and especially the Irish

Volunteers, than with the securing of fresh recruits, and Conscription seemed a useful way of attaining that end. They could not have foreseen that the result of this action would be to unify national feeling in Ireland, to force the "moderates" into the ranks of Sinn Fein and, in particular, to strengthen the Irish Volunteers.

The first results of the English Government's action was the holding of a Conference at the Mansion House of leaders of Sinn Fein, the Irish Party, and Labour, at which a resolution pledging joint action in resistance to Conscription was unanimously adopted. After the meeting a deputation consisting of Messrs. De Valera, John Dillon, Tim Healy, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and Mr. William O'Brien of the Labour Party, waited on the Catholic Bishops, who were in session at Maynooth, with the result that a pronouncement against Conscription was made by the Catholic Hierarchy that same evening. On the following Sunday a pledge to resist Conscription was offered for signature at every Catholic chapel in Ireland, and enormous crowds signed this pledge. A "National Defence Fund," to assist the fight against Conscription, was opened. The response was wonderful. A huge sum was realised in an almost incredibly short time, although the English authorities forbade the Press to publish any letters, appeals or advertisements calling for subscriptions to the Fund.

The Irish Labour Party showed its solidarity on the occasion by calling a national one-day strike as a protest against Conscription.

At the very moment when Mr. Lloyd George announced his Conscription proposals a by-election had fallen due in Offaly, and Sinn Fein had nominated Dr. MacCartan as candidate in opposition to Mr. John Dooley, J.P., the Party's candidate. In view of the Conscription menace Mr. Dooley, on the advice of Mr. Dillon, withdrew his candidature, and Dr. MacCartan was returned unopposed.

A fortnight later Mr. De Valera and Mr. Dillon spoke from the one platform at a monster anti-Conscription meeting in Ballaghadereen.

By a humorous coincidence, it was at this time and in such an atmosphere that the report of Mr. Lloyd George's abortive "Irish Convention" was made public, with its proposals for an "Irish settlement." From its inception the people of Ireland had reposed no confidence and taken no interest in the proceedings of this Conference, composed chiefly of nominees of the English Government; and the country's preoccupation with the Conscription menace was such that nobody gave the report the slightest thought or comment. Even the Parliamentary Party, who had had representatives at the "Convention," were far too concerned with the Conscription crisis to discuss anything else. The Convention's report showed that considerable differences existed among the members, for no fewer than seven separate "Notes," signed by various groups and individuals, were included. However, a majority reported in favour of a severely limited measure of "Home Rule" for a

partitioned Ireland. As far as any effect on the English Government's policy was concerned, or even on public opinion in England or Ireland, the Convention might as well never have been held, and the time and money spent on it were sheer waste. It was never intended seriously by the English Government except as a gesture to delude the people of the United States. The Americans were by this time too deeply immersed in the war to pay much attention to Irish grievances : and Conscription seemed the most effective way of crushing the manifestations of Irish discontent.

Like other bodies, the Executive of the Irish Volunteers met to consider the situation. Their course seemed clear. If the English decided to enforce military service on the people of Ireland, it could only be regarded as a declaration of war ; and it was the duty of the Volunteers to resist by force of arms. It was decided to devise plans for the most desperate resistance and the most drastic measures of retaliation, in view of the outrage which the English Government proposed to inflict on the Irish people.

Michael Collins was at this time in jail owing to his refusal to give bail. It was felt that, in view of the approaching fight, it was absurd that so essential a man should be kept out of it by so trivial a matter. He was asked to give bail, did so, was released and returned to Dublin.

It was decided to issue orders to all Volunteers who were in jail in lieu of bail to give bail and secure their release in order to be out for the

coming fight. Among the prisoners affected by this order was Tom Cullen, Captain of the Wicklow Volunteers. Collins had been already in touch with this young man, and had conceived a high opinion of his capacity. He was very insistent on Cullen giving bail; and when, reluctantly, he did so Collins persuaded him to stay in Dublin and take a position on his staff. This was the beginning of an association which was to last up to the death of Collins.

In addition to being Director of Organisation, Collins had now begun to act as Adjutant-General of the Volunteers, besides performing much of the work properly belonging to a Quartermaster General; and he badly felt the need of a capable assistant. He already had Joe O'Reilly as an assistant, but in a different capacity. I do not think Joe's job was ever defined. He had to do a thousand things; but the nearest definition I can find for his position is confidential messenger and aide-de-camp. Cullen, at this time, was wanted for office work in Bachelor's Walk.

Along with his other Volunteer activities, this time saw the beginning of Collins's Intelligence work. Eamonn Duggan was Director of Intelligence, but circumstances put Collins in touch with an important source of information which was to prove the beginning of remarkable developments.

The political section of the " G " Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police was the principal force of political spies employed by the English

Government in Dublin at this time. Their business was to watch the movements of all prominent workers in the national movement; and very effectively had they done their work in the past.

There were in this body some young men who were in secret sympathy with those whom it was their official duty to spy upon. One of these, Ned Broy, got in touch with a well-known Sinn Féiner, Michael Foley, and, through him, conveyed some messages, giving information, to Collins. Later he arranged a system of sending information through a relative of his, Pat Treacy, who was employed at Kingsbridge, who used to bring his messages to the O'Hanrahans. Shortly after this Tomás Gay, librarian of the Corporation Library in Capel Street, got in touch with another young detective of patriotic leanings, Joe Kavanagh, and, through him, with another, James MacNamara. He communicated any information he received to Harry Boland, who passed it on to Collins. A Volunteer named Sean Duffy also acted as "liaison officer" with Joe Kavanagh, and Greg Murphy also carried messages.

In face of the universal defiance of the English Government's attempt to introduce compulsory military service in Ireland, the next step of the English authorities was awaited with interest. There was some speculation as to the significance of the announcement, early in May, that Lord Wimborne had been succeeded as Lord Lieutenant by Field-Marshal Viscount French, and Mr. Duke, as Chief

Secretary for Ireland, by Mr. Edward Shortt. They were "sworn in" on May 11th, and a few days later showed what the change portended. An event occurred which profoundly affected the future life of Collins and the history of Ireland.

On Wednesday, May 15th, Ned Broy conveyed to Collins, through Treacy and the O'Hanrahans, a list of names of prominent Sinn Feiners whom it was proposed to arrest. He did not know for certain on what day the arrests were to take place, but believed it would be Friday. On Friday evening Joe Kavanagh came to Gay to warn him that there were signs in Dublin Castle of preparations for a series of raids that night. Realising the importance of this information Gay at once sought out Harry Boland, who, at this time, conducted a tailoring establishment in Middle Abbey Street. Boland at once sent word to Michael Collins.

There was a meeting of the Executive of the Irish Volunteers that night at 44 Parnell Square. Collins attended this meeting and notified the members of the contemplated "round-up," without, of course, telling them the source of his information. There had been many scares and alarms of the kind in the past which had proved groundless, and many of the members were sceptical as to the threatened danger. There was, however, a general consensus of opinion that De Valera should avoid all possible danger of arrest by staying in Dublin that night instead of returning to his house in Greystones. De Valera was

reluctant to agree to this, but in view of the strong representations made to him by other members, he seemed inclined to consent to stay. At the conclusion of the meeting, however, he again announced his intention of returning home to Greystones. He did so and was arrested at Greystones.

Between midnight and daybreak the houses of a number of leading Sinn Feiners in Dublin and throughout the country were raided by police and military, and in most cases arrests were made. Only a few persons slipped through the net, among whom was Michael Collins.

The persons arrested, numbering over eighty, included Eamonn De Valera, Arthur Griffith, Count Plunkett, W. T. Cosgrave, Darrell Figgis, Joseph MacGrath, Joseph MacGuinness, Seán Milroy, Seán MacGarry, Countess Marckievicz, Mrs. Tom Clarke, Dan McCarthy, J. Etchingham, Pádraig O'Keeffe, Frank Fahy, Joe MacDonagh, Pierce MacCan, George Nicholls, Richard Coleman, Dr. MacNab, Barney Mellows, Frank Sholdice, Eamonn Morkan, Dr. Cusack, P. O Siochfhradha ("An Seabhadh"), Peadar O hAnnracháin, Frank Lawless, Art O'Connor, Dr. Hayes, Dr. Cusack, D. MacCullough, Walter Cole, L. Lardner, M. Spillane, and George Lyons.

The prisoners were deported to England and "interned" in various English prisons, at Lincoln, Usk, Durham, Gloucester, Birmingham, Reading and Holloway. Simultaneously the British Government announced that they had been arrested, not for their resistance to Conscription in Ireland (the real reason), but because they

had been discovered to be engaged in plotting with Germany, then at war with England. This transparent device deceived nobody in Ireland. It was realised that the object of the round up was to crush Sinn Fein and overcome the organised resistance to Conscription. The connection between the two matters was shown in the proclamation issued on the occasion by Lord French, in which he called on "loyal subjects of his Majesty" to "suppress this treasonable conspiracy and to defeat the treacherous attempt of the Germans to defame the honour of Irishmen for their own ends." He proceeded to call for recruits "to assist in securing the effective prosecution of the war and the welfare and safety of the Empire." He announced that as a means to this end, further steps would be taken "to facilitate and encourage voluntary enlistment in Ireland in his Majesty's Forces, in the hope that without resort to compulsion the contribution of Ireland to those forces may be brought up to the proper strength and made to correspond to the contributions of other parts of the Empire."

In this dishonest way did the English Government endeavour to break up the national solidarity created by the proposal to enforce compulsory military service on Ireland. As far as this purpose was concerned the effort was a complete failure, although the imprisonment of so many of its leaders was undoubtedly a blow to the Sinn Fein organisation. The British Government declined to produce

any evidence of the alleged plotting with Germany. They could not, as no such thing existed. Nobody in Ireland gave the smallest credence to the story, which came to be sarcastically referred to as "the German Plot." It was realised that it was merely an attempt to exploit anti-German prejudices against Sinn Fein, and frighten the supporters of the Parliamentary Party from association with its members.

It may be mentioned that Lord Wimborne, the retiring Lord Lieutenant, publicly stated that he had no knowledge of any evidence of the alleged plot with Germany.

That Collins escaped the round-up was largely an accident, but it was an accident that changed the course of Irish history. After the meeting of the Executive had concluded Collins, Boland, and Duggan walked up to Vaughan's Hotel. Collins had a bicycle which was destined to be his inseparable companion for many a day to come. The three men met other friends in Vaughan's Hotel, and stayed there till considerably after midnight. At length they broke up and started homewards. Collins had only to travel a couple of hundred yards to his lodgings at 44 Mountjoy Street. On rounding the corner of Granby Row he saw a military lorry drawn up outside Miss MacCarthy's house and soldiers at the door. He at once turned to the right up towards Berkeley Road. At the top of Mountjoy Street was the shop of Mr. J. J. Walsh, and Collins remembered that Walsh was one of the men to be arrested.

He sent a companion (Greg Murphy) to warn him, with the result that J. J. Walsh got away before the raiding party arrived. Collins now thought of his recent companions and determined to save them from arrest. He cycled after Duggan and overtook him on his way home to Drumcondra. Duggan, being warned, took charge of Collins's papers, and proceeded cautiously in the direction of his residence in Drumcondra, to find that it had already been raided and the raiding party had departed before he arrived home. Harry Boland had the same experience; when he arrived home the party raiding for him had already departed. Collins then thought of Seán MacGarry, the General Secretary of the Volunteers, who lived in Clontarf. He proceeded to his house but found he was too late, as Seán had been already arrested. It was now an advanced hour, and he realised there was little hope of doing more. He decided that the "safest place" for him was a house that had already been successfully raided, and so went comfortably to sleep in Seán MacGarry's house.

CHAPTER X.

Michael Collins in the Gap

May—June, 1918

THE night of the "German Plot round-up" was the beginning of the really important and interesting portion of Michael Collins's life. The wholesale arrests left the Sinn Fein political organisation leaderless; but it left the Irish Volunteer organisation unhurt. The menace of Conscription, and the absence of an immediate political programme, rendered the strengthening of the Volunteers the essential service of the moment. By the time the political leaders were released in March of the following year Collins had built up the machinery which was to baffle the strength and resources of the English Government.

From the night of May 17th, 1918, except for a two months' respite in the beginning of 1919, Collins was evading arrest by the English, or, as we called it, "on the run," up to the Truce of July 11th, 1921. His "life on the bicycle" had begun. From that time he rarely moved about town except on a push bicycle, but apart from this he was able to boast that he

never allowed the danger of arrest to interfere with the freedom of his movements. He wore no disguise and never had such a thing as the "body guard" of English legends. For a time he abandoned his office at Bachelor's Walk, but Tom Cullen went on with his work there as usual under Collins's directions. The National Aid Association had severed all connection with the office, and shortly afterwards terminated the engagement of Collins as their secretary. There was a feeling among the more peaceful members of the Association that their secretary was a dangerous young man who would get them all into trouble.

At this time Collins slept at different friends' houses, which he also used for his work and for meeting people. The houses principally used by him in this way were No. 1 Brendan Road, Donnybrook the house of Mr. Batt. O'Connor, a building contractor, whose name will frequently appear in these pages; and "Walter House," Richmond Road, the residence of Mrs. Lynch, whose son Michael was Vice-Commandant of the Dublin Brigade. He also slept some times at the residence of another Lynch, Denis, a brother of Diarmuid Lynch.

Batt. O'Connor, who had been an intimate friend of Seán MacDiarmuda, had become warmly attached to Collins, and for him and his wife Collins always entertained a peculiarly high regard.

Collins was a member of the Sinn Féin Executive, but, for the first few months that followed the round up, owing to the apparent

imminence of the Conscription menace, he paid little attention to Sinn Féin, did not attend the Executive meetings, and concentrated all his energies on the organisation of the Volunteers. The work of the political organisation of Sinn Féin fell upon Harry Boland, who had escaped the round-up through Collins's warning. Harry stepped into the gap caused by the imprisonment of the two honorary secretaries, Stack and Figgis, taking over their duties, with Alderman Tom Kelly as his co-secretary, while the place of Pádraig O'Keeffe, assistant secretary, was filled by Patrick Sheehan, who had been private secretary to De Valera.

Harry Boland also resorted to a bicycle, but, unlike Collins, disguised himself with a false moustache and spectacles, and in this "make up" attended his secretarial work in Sinn Féin headquarters daily, entering by the back. For many months detectives watched the front door of the Harcourt Street building without discovering that there was a back entrance.

Harry Boland had by this time become one of Collins's warmest and most intimate friends. He clung to his "disguise" for some months, but finally abandoned it. He used to relate a story at his own expense as to the cause of his abandoning it. He said that it was reported to him that a stranger remarked to a friend of his—"I saw a man passing on a bicycle, with a false moustache and spectacles with no glass in them. I wonder who he was."

Another man who had escaped arrest in Dublin was Seán O Murthuile, who happened to be

staying in the Clarence Hotel at the time. Detectives asked for "John Hurley," an attempt at an English version of the name, and while they were arguing with the clerk, who protested there was nobody registered in that name, a friendly waiter gave Seán warning and he escaped. In Galway Pádraic O Máille resisted arrest, wounded a policeman and escaped.

The services of Harry Boland to Sinn Féin at this juncture cannot be overestimated. Most of the energetic and pugnacious elements on the Executive had been eliminated by the arrests. Those who were left were depressed by the sense of their own impotence, and, in some cases, intimidated. Boland supplied the energy to keep the organisation going, and the courage to face dangers and difficulties. He resisted counsels of timidity or despondency, which were only too prevalent. He kept in close touch with Collins, whom he continually consulted with regard to the work. He was also in daily touch with me.

In view of the menace of Conscription Cathal Brugha, then Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, went secretly to England to make arrangements for reprisals in that country if Conscription were enforced in Ireland. Dick Mulcahy, as Deputy Chief of Staff, took his place. Plans had been formed for the most extreme measures of resistance if there was any attempt to enforce compulsory military service on Ireland.

It was felt that the attempt to enforce military service in the ranks of their oppressors on an unwilling people by an alien Government, if persisted in in the face of national resistance,

was tantamount to a massacre of unarmed civilians by a foreign Power; and that in such a case the most extreme measures of reprisal were justified. Cathal Brugha, in particular, felt strongly that in certain contingencies we would be justified in shooting members of the foreign Government responsible for such a horror. He determined to take measures to see that this would be done in certain eventualities. He proceeded to Liverpool, accompanied by four picked men, and was placed by Collins in touch with Neil Kerr, of whom I shall shortly have much to say. Eight more men were supplied by Kerr in Liverpool, and the whole party proceeded to London to perfect their plans.

At this time weekly meetings of the General Headquarters Staff, and of the resident Executive, were held, sometimes in Cullenswood House, Ranelagh (a school belonging to Mrs. Pearse, mother of Patrick Pearse), and sometimes in a room in the offices of the Dublin Typographical Society (the printers' trade union) at 35 Lower Gardiner Street, a place that had been used by the I.R.B. for many years previously. The personnel of the resident Executive and G.H.Q. was nearly identical. It is necessary here to give some account of the constitution of the latter body.

Collins, as has been said, besides being Director of Organisation, had taken over the duties of Adjutant General, and was also doing much work properly belonging to other departments. As Adjutant General he acted practically as General Secretary to the military organisation.

Seán MacGarry had been Secretary to the Executive, but he was arrested in the "round-up."

The distinction between the Executive and G.H.Q., was that the former was supposed to control the "policy" of the organisation, while the latter was supposed to control only its military activities. This fine distinction was not very closely observed in practice, as was natural, especially considering that the majority of those concerned were members of both bodies. Thanks to Collins and Mulcahy the meetings of G.H.Q. were conducted in a very systematic and businesslike manner, each Director in turn submitting a weekly report of the working of his department, discussing problems and inviting suggestions.

The Director of Training was M. W. O'Reilly, who has been mentioned as Collins's first Commandant at Frongoch. The Director of Equipment was Michael Staines. Diarmuid O'Hegarty (now Secretary to the Ministry of the Irish Free State) was Director of Communications. Dick McKee, as Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, and I, as Editor of the official organ (of which more anon), were also admitted members of Headquarters Staff.

The Director of Intelligence was Eamonn Duggan, afterwards one of the signatories to the Treaty. His permanent "Intelligence Staff" consisted of a single man, Christopher Carbery, now an officer in the Free State Army. But, as has been shown, Collins had already tapped important sources of intelligence, and was working them independently.

The Director of Engineering was Rory O'Connor, a recent convert to the Separatist movement. Before Easter Week Rory had belonged to the United Irish League, the Parliamentary Party's organisation; and even at this time did not seem very "extreme" in his views. The extreme line of action taken by him after the passing of the Treaty was a surprise to many who knew him well. He was a man of considerable ability in his particular branch of activity, and, as will be shown, took a leading part in planning some of the most successful achievements of the Volunteers. Rory O'Connor at this time held an important position on the Engineering Staff of the Dublin Corporation. He was a man of education and culture who concealed a strong sense of humour under an air of gloomy solemnity. He was dark haired, of medium stature, slightly built, hollow-cheeked, and seemingly not very robust. He spoke in a deep cavernous voice. His manner was not attractive to strangers, but those who were intimate with him found him a very pleasant and sociable companion.

But the man calling for most notice was Dick McKee, who, after Collins, was certainly, from a military point of view, the most energetic and efficient member of G.H.Q. He was a printer by trade, in the employment of M. H. Gill and Son, who had acquired a wide range of technical knowledge which he was able to apply effectively. In planning elaborate operations with a minute attention to details he showed extraordinary capacity; and the formation of the "flying

columns," which played such a big part in the later guerilla warfare, was largely due to his initiative. Dick McKee was tall, dark, slight, good-looking, with a very gentle manner. He gave a general impression of resourcefulness, energy and practical efficiency. Collins had a very high opinion of his capacity, and reposed great confidence in him.

Mention has already been made of Collins's faithful assistant, Joe O'Reilly, now aide-de-camp to President Cosgrave, whose services were of immense value to Collins. He carried confidential messages, kept watch, interviewed people on behalf of Collins, and made himself useful in a thousand ways. He was the soul of punctuality, and thought nothing of keeping an appointment at three or four in the morning. In Collins's dealings with sailors, postal officials and others, which will be hereafter mentioned, O'Reilly frequently acted as his lieutenant.

Tom Cullen at this time was doing the work which in a later period devolved on a Quartermaster General—superintending the import and distribution of arms, ammunition and military equipment, and the circulation of "*An tÓglách*," the official organ of the Volunteers. Of course all this work had to be done secretly. Cullen was a powerfully-built, athletic young man, with a cheery open manner that disarmed suspicion, and later proved a valuable asset in his work as Intelligence Officer.

It was shortly after the "round up" that Collins became familiar with Liam Tobin, who

was later to become his Assistant Director of Intelligence. Tobin was still a very young man. He began life as a clerk, and took part in the Easter Week Rising when he was barely twenty years of age. He was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, and was one of the Portland and Lewes convicts. He first came into contact with Collins in connection with the work of the National Aid Association. After his release he became associated with the New Ireland Assurance Society, then a new venture. He had become Intelligence Officer of the Dublin Brigade, and thereby came under the notice of Collins as a particularly good man at Intelligence work.

Tom Cullen and I had been fellow-prisoners in Mountjoy and Belfast. When I received the order to give bail I hesitated for some days, as I feared my action might be misunderstood, and this hesitation had amusing consequences. When I at length decided that it was my duty to get out I wrote to Duggan, who as my "solicitor" took the necessary steps, and Harry Boland and Joseph MacGuinness went security for me. This was on the afternoon of May 17th, and the round-up took place that night. The bail-bonds duly arrived at Belfast Prison next day, and I was released on the security of three men, one of whom (MacGuinness) had been arrested the night before, and the other two of whom were "on the run." Of course the Prison Governor did not know this. Under the circumstances I deemed it judicious to keep out of the public gaze. I made my way to Dublin

and was soon afterwards informed by Collins that he had learned from one of his detective friends that a deportation order for me had been sent to Belfast Prison, to be put in force on my completing my sentence. This was a month after I had obtained my liberty. The British authorities were under the impression I was still in Belfast Prison.

Early in July Collins evolved the idea of starting a secret official organ for the "Irish Volunteers." The project was sanctioned by G.H.Q., and Collins proceeded to make the necessary arrangements. He asked me to become editor, to which I gladly consented. Such was the genesis of "An tOglách," of which I was editor for the following five years.

The new secret journal was a small four-page production, and at first appeared only twice a month. It was printed by the Gaelic Press, Liffey Street, and all the arrangements for distribution as well as the carrying backward and forward of "copy" and proofs was done under Collins's direction. He took a keen interest in the project, and for several months contributed a series of "Notes on Organisation," in which he explained the scheme of organisation for the framing of which he was chiefly responsible.

The first issue of the new organ appeared on August 15th, under the title "An tOglách, Official Organ of the Irish Volunteers." It consisted of a leading article by the editor, "Notes from Headquarters," contributed by Directors of the various departments, dealing with the work of their departments, and

"General Notes" by the editor. Most of the Directors at this period were only able to devote some of their spare time to Volunteer work. Of all the Directors none was so regular and punctual in his contributions as Collins, who hardly ever missed an issue up to April, 1919, when the publication of the paper was temporarily suspended owing to my imprisonment.

A few extracts from Collins's "Notes on Organisation" deserve to be reproduced. They concern one of his principal activities at this period. They show his outlook and the spirit in which he tackled the problem of building up an efficient machine to resist English violence. His first contribution begins as follows:—

"It is now some months since the Scheme of Military Organisation, adopted by Headquarters Staff, has been laid before the Companies. From communications received from Volunteer officers all over the country the Director of Organisation is satisfied that the scheme fairly meets general requirements. Some additions to the scheme and some minor amendments will be made in these notes. We must first, though, attempt to realise what the functions of the Volunteer force will be in the future, what its restrictions may be and what its capabilities are. In other words, we have to place before ourselves a definite aim and then make arrangements to achieve it. Let us accept the words of a great Prussian—adapted by Ruskin—'I desire for my own country to secure that her soldiers should be her tutors

and the captains of her armies—captains also of her mind,’ as our motto.

“The organisation scheme is not meant to be regarded as complete, but it is hoped that it forms a basis upon which a considerable degree of efficiency and sound military discipline can be secured. It indicates a complete organisation for the Company, for the Battalion and for the Brigade. It ensures the recognition by Headquarters of smaller units than the Company in special districts. It lays down the manner of electing officers. It provides general regulations for discipline and courts martial. It defines the relations of the various units with each other and with Headquarters.”

In the next issue he deals with the Company, which he terms “the tactical unit of the Volunteer system,” adding: “It is the foundation stone of the whole Volunteer system. On its soundness depends the durability of the whole structure.”

“In connection with the organisation of the Company the following basic principles must be kept clearly before the mind’s eye:—

“1. Forget the Company of the regular army. We are not establishing or attempting to establish a regular force on the lines of the standing armies of even the small independent countries of Europe. If we undertake any such thing we shall fail. Our object is to bring into existence, train and equip as riflemen scouts a body of men, and to secure that these are

capable of acting as a self-contained unit, supplied with all the services that would ordinarily be required in the event of martial action *in this country*.

"2. Remember that we have to depend on the good-will, mutual confidence, and instinctive patriotism of the men for discipline and service."

He then proceeds to deal in detail with the duties of the various officers of the Company and Battalion. The scheme was based upon that of the old Volunteers, who were organised on a territorial basis, starting with local companies as units, afterwards organised into Battalions. The Battalion was the largest unit in the old Volunteers up to Easter Week, 1916, except in Dublin, where a Brigade was formed of the five Battalions a few months before the Rising. Under the new scheme the larger unit of the Brigade came into being; and at a later period the entire Volunteer force was organised in Brigades covering areas equal to a county, or a half, or a third of a county.

"An tOglách" was, of course, circulated only among Volunteers, and undoubtedly had a very important effect on the members of the organisation. Its first leading article declared:—

"Volunteers are not politicians; they were not created for the purposes of parades, demonstrations, or political activities; they follow no political leader as such; their allegiance is to the Irish Nation. To their own chosen leaders they render the obedience that

all soldiers render to their officers. Their obedience to their officers is not affected by personal considerations. It is the office, not the man, to whom deference is due.

“The Irish Volunteers have chosen in open Convention those leaders in whom they have confidence to control the public policy of the organisation. It is the duty of those leaders to conform that policy to the national will, by co-operating on the military side with those bodies and institutions which, in other departments of the national life, are striving to make our Irish Republic a tangible reality.”

The next three issues of the paper dealt editorially with the Conscription menace, which at the moment seemed the most pressing problem for Volunteers. The Irish people had been lulled into a false sense of security by the announcement, at the time of the “German Plot” round up, that the enforcement of conscription would be postponed and that a further trial would be given to “voluntary recruiting” for the English Army. The Executive of the Irish Volunteers was satisfied, from the information in its possession, that the people were living in a fool’s paradise, and that the English Government was fully determined to enforce Conscription, and had all its measures taken with a view to this. On September 14th “An tOglách” declared:—

“That the nefarious design of the enemy against the people of Ireland will be persisted

in has now been made abundantly clear. Lord French, the British soldier appointed by the enemy as their representative in Ireland, has declared authoritatively that the English Government's policy of 'Conscription for Ireland' remains unchanged. This statement has been officially confirmed and issued to the 'recruiting committees' established by the enemy in Ireland. One of their officials has declared that 'the Government's attitude on the matter had been very much hardened within the past fortnight. The necessary Conscription machinery was already installed all over Ireland.' That this last statement is correct is a matter of common knowledge. The most elaborate military preparations have been taken by the enemy for their campaign of extermination against the Irish people

"The policy of the Irish Volunteers in such a contingency is, of course, a foregone conclusion. Never at any moment since the question first arose has there existed the slightest divergence of opinion among those in control of the Army of Ireland, nor amongst the officers or men, as to their duty in case of an attempt by the enemy to enforce Conscription in Ireland. That duty is summed up in the advice of an English newspaper to English soldiers in Ireland. 'Don't argue, but shoot.' It is our duty to resist Conscription actively, working together as an armed, organised and disciplined body, acting under the orders of our responsible leaders, in accordance with the plans which have been carefully worked out by the Headquarters

Staff. But in an emergency every true Volunteer should know how to act for himself; it is his duty to resist to the death, to use every weapon in his power, be it knife, pitchfork, rifle or bomb; to make his death or capture dearly purchased by the lives of enemies. Nor should his resistance be ended by capture; never should he consent to wear the uniform of the enemy, nor obey his orders, in prison or out of prison."

I have quoted these latter passages not from vanity, but because of the light they throw upon the situation and on the outlook of the leaders of the Irish Volunteers at the time. For the same reason, I reproduce another passage from the same article to show foreigners how the threat of Conscription was regarded by patriotic Irishmen:—

"The Government of a foreign nation, occupying our country by force of arms, not content with its usual plundering and oppression, now proposes to inflict upon the manhood of Ireland a fate worse than death. It claims power, not only over our lives, but over our souls; it dares to threaten us not merely with death (for which we have shown how little we care), but the most degraded of deaths; to die fighting as slaves for our enemies in a fight that is not ours."

It may readily be conceived that the publication of such a journal, which boasted to be "the only uncensored paper in Ireland," aroused the fury of the English authorities in

Ireland when copies fell into their hands. Volunteers found with copies of "An tOglách" were court-martialled and received particularly severe sentences of imprisonment. The "Gaelic Press" was already under suspicion. It was raided several times but without result. On one occasion matter for "An tOglách," set up in type, was lying in a galley when the place was raided by detectives, but the intelligent "sleuth hounds" failed to recognise it. On another occasion an edition of "An tOglách," freshly printed, was lying in the place when the proprietor, Joe Stanley, saw detectives approaching. With great presence of mind he rushed to the front door, protested, asked for their warrant, and created "a scene" in the street, thereby giving his men time to remove the precious copies of "An tOglách" out by the back. Ultimately the relentless persecution of Mr. Stanley by the English authorities compelled him to close down his business.

In the mid-October issue of the journal the place of the editorial was taken by an article on the Conscription menace, "by a leading Volunteer at present in prison," entitled "Ruthless Warfare," which particularly horrified the British authorities. Men found with copies of this particular article received sentences of two years hard labour, and passages from it were quoted in the English Press as examples of the blood-thirsty spirit of the Irish rebels. The identity of the writer was never since divulged. There is no harm at this time of day in revealing that the article was written by

Mr. Ernest Blythe, now Minister of Finance in the Free State. The article was handed to me by Michael Collins, with a special request that it be inserted. The passage which attracted most attention deserves reproduction :

“ Once the struggle begins we should realise that it is more and worse than war. For war is the combat of one armed force with another. A conscription campaign would be an unprovoked onslaught by an army upon a civilian population, which would be given no choice but between murder on the spot and massacre after an interval. If England decided on this atrocity, then we, on our part, must decide that in our resistance we shall acknowledge no limit and no scruple. We must recognise that anyone, civilian or soldier, who assists directly or by connivance in this crime against us, merits no more consideration than a wild beast, and should be killed without mercy or hesitation as opportunity offers. To prevent our people being divided, to prevent men from being seduced by certain exemption if they will surrender, or promises of home service duty if they will attest, or by similar devices of the enemy, we must from the first insist upon a clean cut amongst the population of Ireland. Any man who knowingly and willingly does anything to facilitate the working of the machinery of conscription must be dealt with exactly as if he were an enemy soldier. Thus the man who serves on an exemption tribunal, the doctor who treats soldiers or examines

conscripts, the man who voluntarily surrenders when called for, the man who in any shape or form applies for an exemption, the man who drives a police-car or assists in the transport of army supplies, all these having assisted the enemy must be shot or otherwise destroyed with the least possible delay. In short, we must show them that it is not healthy to be against us, and that those who are not going to be against us must be with us. By thus producing the clean-cut, and insisting that every man who stands for Ireland shall do his bit, we shall induce Irishmen in Great Britain to realise that when the tussle is on their duty is not, certainly, to continue quietly making munitions, that in fact their only business with munitions is to send them crashing to the skies."

Collins at this period still retained a slim and boyish appearance. Although twenty-eight years old he did not look much over twenty. His complexion was fair and his hair a neutral brown, neither very dark nor light. For some reason which I cannot understand a great many people who saw him received the impression that his hair was black or very dark. When he first appeared in public after the Truce more than one journalist described him as having "coal black hair," which shows how unreliable such impressions are. He was about five feet eleven inches in height. His face was intensely mobile and expressive, changing rapidly from a scowl of anger to a broad grin of enjoyment, now showing scorn or defiance and now the

sunniest good humour. His restless energy showed itself in a series of abrupt jerky movements, and in an explosive brusquerie of manner which often offended the pompous and pretentious, and those sedate persons who disliked hurry. He always dressed well, and was particularly neat and tidy in his habits. His suits were generally of dark grey. In winter he usually wore only a light raincoat; I do not remember ever seeing him in a greatcoat, nor in any form of headgear except a soft hat.

Early in 1919 the following description of him appeared in the police "Hue and Cry":—

"Clean shaven, boyish appearance, dresses well, dark brown eyes, regular nose, fresh complexion, oval face, active make; 5 feet 11 inches high; about 30 years of age; dark hair; generally wears trilby hat and fawn overcoat."

Strange to say in 1921, when he was very much "wanted," and large rewards were offered for his capture, the "Hue and Cry" did not reproduce this description, but confined itself to the laconic words:—"Michael Collins, M.P. (Dublin City and Cork W.R.), age 28, height 5 feet 11, complexion fresh." At the time in question Collins was in his 31st year; but most of the descriptions in the "Hue and Cry" teem with similar inaccuracies.

It was the custom of Collins in his moments

of relaxation to assume the accent, pronunciation and idiom of his native Clonakilty, and thereby lend additional point to his droll and witty remarks and racy vigour to descriptions and denunciations. As a rule he spoke perfect English, and his writings and speeches were unexceptionable, but it was a kind of humorous affectation with him among his intimates to use words and pronunciations peculiar to West Cork. Irish words and ejaculations were interspersed freely with his English; and he was not very sparing in the use of expletives. His laugh was not the deep guffaw which some men call hearty laughter, but a rather high-pitched prolonged chuckle of intense appreciation. He had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and a quickness in repartee in keeping with the rapidity of his mental processes. When speaking or listening he had a trick of jerking his face around suddenly to the right or left, in a line with his shoulder—a peculiarly characteristic attitude. When making some assertion which he expected to hear contradicted, or uttering a determination, he was wont to thrust his chin out in a peculiarly dogged manner. Reasoned opposition to his views he always received with good humour, but he was particularly impatient of any obstacles presented to a work he desired done, especially when the obstacles were due to the lethargy, neglect or timidity of others.

At this period Collins was rarely to be seen without a cigarette in his mouth. He admitted once that he smoked between forty and fifty

cigarettes a day. A year later he suddenly gave up smoking altogether, but he retained the habit of carrying boxes of cigarettes around in his pocket, offering them to his friends but never touching them himself—a striking instance of will power. From 1919 onwards he drank only a little sherry, though on a few occasions, when nearly in a state of collapse from overwork, strain and neglect of meals, he took brandy. He was a very moderate drinker. I mention this because I am aware that lying statements and scurrilous cartoons on this point were circulated by his political opponents at the time of the Treaty debates. It is quite clear to any man of common sense that only a very temperate man could possibly have got through the enormous amount of work which Collins transacted daily and nightly, with the strictest punctuality and system. I was his constant companion in his convivial moments, both in the period of prolonged tension before the Truce, and the period of reaction which followed, and my testimony on this point is emphatic and unequivocal.

At this period he had not yet achieved that dominance over his associates which he afterwards attained, but they had learned to recognise and appreciate his matchless energy and efficiency, and he inspired all his fellow-workers with a sense of confidence.

It may be mentioned that the termination of Collins's appointment as secretary of the National Aid Association, and his consequent loss of salary, caused him some financial

embarrassment, and, late in 1918, he found himself uncomfortably limited in his income. A great many people forget such trivial details, and seem to imagine that men devote their energies to patriotic endeavour because they find it profitable. The career of some men has afforded colour to this cynical view, but Collins certainly never found patriotism a paying proposition.

One of the group of Collins's colleagues "on the run," Eamonn Duggan, had an amusing experience at this time. He made the acquaintance of the Right Hon. James MacMahon, then Under Secretary for Ireland of the English Government, and had several conversations with him. Of course Sir James had no suspicion that the highly respectable solicitor whom he met was a member of G.H.Q. of the Irish Volunteers. He formed the impression that he was a most pacific and reasonable person, and was pained to hear that he was liable to arrest and internment. He exerted himself successfully to get the deportation order withdrawn, with the result that Mr. Duggan was able to sleep at home again.

Reference has been made in the last chapter to the dealings of Collins, through intermediaries, with political detectives who were secretly in sympathy with Sinn Féin. Later he got into direct touch with several members of the political section of the "G. Division," as the detectives were called. This was the beginning of his gigantic work of undermining the English Government's espionage system, the foundation of English rule in Ireland.

By June or July Collins was in direct contact with several political detectives. One of these was Joe Kavanagh, already mentioned, who died early in 1920. Another was James MacNamara, who was destined to do much important work for him, and narrowly escaped detection during the Black and Tan period. Another was Ned Broy, who was arrested by the English in 1921, and at a later stage Collins came in touch with David Neligan. Both the last two now occupy high administrative positions in the Civic Guard. MacNamara was killed in a motor smash while serving in the National Army. There were other detectives who rendered assistance, but the four mentioned were the principal ones.

I must now refer to Collins's work in connection with foreign communications, and the smuggling of men and arms into Ireland—a very important branch of his activities. This work was carried on chiefly through Liverpool.

As far back as 1908, when Collins, as a youth of eighteen, visited Liverpool with a London-Irish hurling team to play in a match, he made the acquaintance, at a meeting of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in that city, of Neill Kerr, a very active member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. This acquaintance was destined to have important results.

During the imprisonment of the Easter Week insurrectionists (among whom was his own son), Neill Kerr had succeeded in collecting a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition in Liverpool, which he subsequently succeeded in

shipping to Dublin. Collins, who was in touch with him through the I.R.B., and was struck by his energy and efficiency, decided to deal with him personally in the matter, and place him in charge of the acquiring and importing of arms for the Irish Volunteers. Kerr, who was at this time in the employ of the Cunard Steamship Co., had already got sailors working for him on ships sailing between Dublin and Liverpool, and with these men also Collins got rapidly in touch. He made several flying visits to Liverpool with a view to understanding all the machinery. At this time the importation of arms for the Volunteers was one of the most urgent necessities, and, though it was not strictly speaking a branch of Collins's duties as Adjutant General nor as Director of Organisation, he gave much of his attention to this work, and continued to carry it on up to the time of the Truce.

Neill Kerr had an active and able assistant in Steve Lanigan, who held an important position in the Liverpool Custom House. Although he was of military age, Lanigan was exempted from conscription as being an "indispensable" official. He was an old member of the I.R.B., and, from the inception of Kerr's work for Collins, he acted as his lieutenant, making frequent journeys to Dublin to see Collins. He was never suspected by the English authorities until December, 1921, when he and Kerr were arrested and interned. Mr. Lanigan is now Deputy Accountant of Revenue in the Free State.

Perhaps the most noteworthy of the many mariners who carried on the dangerous and

difficult work of communications between Ireland and England, the importation of arms, and the secret conveyance of men in and out of Ireland, was Ned Kavanagh, an elderly sailor in the employ of the Tedcastle Company. Ned was engaged in this work as far back as 1916, and during the darkest days of the Black and Tan régime "carried on" with cool imperturbability. Collins had a great affection for this staunch old seaman. Kavanagh afterwards served in the National Army, and was killed in a motor smash during the Civil War. By a tragic coincidence his son, also serving in the National Army, had been killed in action a couple of days previously, and father and son were buried at the same time in the one grave.

Other seamen on the cross-Channel boats who gave valuable assistance were Paddy MacCarthy, Willie Verner, Paddy Wafer, Maurice Byrne and Harry Shortt.

In describing the plans for the Easter Week Insurrection I have already referred to Tommy O'Connor, who carried the dispatches between John Devoy and the I.R.B. leaders. O'Connor took part in the Insurrection in Dublin, and, escaping capture, continued his work of Atlantic dispatch carrier for the I.R.B. Late in 1918, however, when his ship was approaching New York, he was detected and arrested by the American Government on the charge of carrying surreptitious messages into the country. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, but was released before the time was out and resumed his activities. Another "dispatch carrier,"

M. W., was arrested in England and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He served his sentence and then became engaged in a fresh branch of activity—the smuggling of arms from Germany to Ireland via Liverpool. Of the Atlantic seamen the one most directly in touch with Michael Collins was Dick O'Neill, who frequently came to Dublin, and met him at Vaughan's Hotel. O'Neill carried on his work without detection up to the time of the Truce. There were many other helpers in Liverpool and on the boats in the work of communications, but while I would like to put the names of all these brave and zealous workers on record, the time has hardly yet come when it would be expedient to do so.

There was another branch of communications which Collins had also begun to organise—the Post Office. Here his old London friend, Sam Maguire, rendered most valuable assistance, and Collins later got in touch with sympathetic Dublin postal officials. At a later stage this branch of the work acquired great importance and assumed mighty dimensions in connection with Collins's Intelligence work. In the time of the Black and Tans, Collins had workers practically in every important post office in Ireland, and almost all English Government, military and police cipher messages were intercepted and decoded.

A system of communication with Volunteer prisoners in Irish Jails, by means of sympathetic warders, was also built up. Michael Staines got in touch with prisoners in Mountjoy Jail

through a prison official named Berry, with whom he was friendly. Other Mountjoy warders who, at a later stage, did very important and valuable work for Collins were Peter Breslin, Frawley, Daly and Murphy, and there were several others who also assisted to a minor degree. In Belfast and other jails where Volunteers were confined, similar means of communication were tapped.

It was about this time that Collins first made the acquaintance, through Joe O'Reilly, of Batty Hyland, the proprietor of a small garage in Denzille Lane, who had the honour of becoming Collins's driver during the troubled times that followed. Collins usually travelled by bicycle, but when he found it necessary to use a motor, Hyland had a car specially reserved for his use. Batty Hyland and his brother Joe, were, so to speak, Collins's personal transport officers.

In London Collins got into touch with Mr. John Chartres, who then occupied an important position in the English Civil Service, and was able to do much valuable work of a confidential nature for him. Mr. Chartres was afterwards one of the secretaries to the Irish Delegation of Plenipotentiaries who negotiated the Treaty, and is now in the service of the Saorstát.

CHAPTER XI.

Sinn Fein "Suppressed"

June — November, 1918

At the time when the English Government had sprung their "German Plot" story on an astonished world, as a cloak for their measures to overcome the resistance to Conscription, there was a Parliamentary vacancy in East Cavan which Arthur Griffith had agreed to contest. The Irish Parliamentary Party appealed to Mr. Griffith to stand down "in the interest of national unity against Conscription," pointing out that they had withdrawn their candidate in Offaly for the same reason and allowed Dr. MacCartan to be returned unopposed. Mr. Griffith did not view the matter in this light; indeed he might have retorted that the Party had only made a virtue of necessity in withdrawing their candidate when they had no hope of victory. The "German Plot" round up, and the arrest of Mr. Griffith, provided a further cogent argument for proceeding with his candidature in East Cavan. The Party opposed to him a strong local candidate, Mr. O'Hanlon, but the result of the election was a victory for Griffith, who polled 3,785 votes to his opponent's 2,581.

The position of Director of Elections for Sinn Féin had been held by Joseph MacGuinness. On his arrest Mr. James O'Mara stepped into the breach, and filled the post of Director of Elections with energy and efficiency.

On June 3rd a " Proclamation " was issued from Dublin Castle calling for 50,000 Irishmen to join the English Army by October 1st, and after that date demanding 2,000 or 3,000 a month " in order to maintain those divisions." This proclamation was regarded as a veiled threat, but it had no appreciable effect on the public. The recruits for the English Army were not forthcoming, but large numbers joined the Irish Volunteers.

On the 3rd July the English Government issued another " proclamation " solemnly declaring " the Sinn Féin Organisation, Sinn Féin Clubs, the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and the Gaelic League " suppressed, on the grounds that " the said organisations in parts of Ireland encourage and aid persons to commit crime and incite to acts of violence and intimidation, and interfere with the administration of the law, and disturb the maintenance of law and order." It would be hard to conceive a proceeding more farcical or more calculated to bring the English Government into contempt and ridicule than this " proclamation." All the organisations named in it carried on their work as usual after its publication. One of them, the Gaelic League, was simply an organisation for the revival and spread of the Irish language.

Next day appeared a fresh proclamation, from

the English military General Headquarters in Ireland, prohibiting the "holding or taking part in meetings, assemblies, or processions in public places within the whole of Ireland," unless such meeting or assembly was authorised in writing by the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, or the County Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

The Gaelic Athletic Association, which was concerned with the revival and encouragement of national games and athletics, had not been mentioned in the list of "suppressed" organisations; it is probable that the Dublin Castle authorities had confused it with the Gaelic League, the language organisation. Under the terms of the latter proclamation a number of hurling and football matches, held in various parts of Ireland under the auspices of the Gaelic Athletic Association, were stopped by the police. The Executive of the Association determined to take up the challenge, and ordered sports to be held simultaneously, under the auspices of the Association, at every centre in Ireland. This programme was carried out successfully on August 4th without interference by the English authorities.

Harry Boland, now Acting Secretary of Sinn Féin, induced the Sinn Féin Executive to follow the example of the Gaelic Athletic Association, and answer the challenge of the English Government by holding meetings all over the country at which a statement supplied from Headquarters should be read by a prominent local man. The order was accordingly issued

to hold meetings all over the country on the 15th of August. The order was carried out everywhere. None of the meetings were interfered with, but, except in Dublin and some very peaceful districts where the local police were anxious to avoid trouble, the speakers were subsequently arrested and court-martialled, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In fact the demonstration proved more harmful to us than effective, as the men who took the risk of addressing the prohibited meetings were usually the most courageous men in their districts, and frequently Volunteer officers, and their imprisonment was a decided misfortune. This was one of several examples of Boland's impetuosity and lack of foresight.

At this time Collins was too full of his Volunteer work to attend the meetings of the Sinn Féin Executive, but he kept in touch with the political side of things through Harry Boland. Collins, Boland and I were at this time constantly in one another's company, and were sometimes nicknamed " the Three Musketeers."

It was at this period that Collins was prostrated with a sudden attack of pleurisy. He endeavoured to struggle through his work while suffering intense pain, but finally collapsed, and had to be carried to bed. Those of us who knew him intimately had grave fears of a fatal termination to his illness, or at least of a prolonged period of suffering for him, and the concern which we felt through personal affection was strengthened by alarm, when we considered how many activities he controlled and what a loss

he would be to the cause. It helped us to realise how indispensable he had become. Boland, in particular, was in a state of nervous anxiety. In a few days, however, Collins insisted on getting out of bed and going back to work, though he was hardly recovered. When I remonstrated with him on his imprudence he answered with a cheery smile—"The work won't wait for me."

Early in July the Irish public were disturbed by rumours of the brutal ill-treatment of political prisoners in Belfast Jail. These rumours were confirmed by the publication of an affidavit signed by Mr. Charles Kenny, of No. 1, Ulster Terrace, North Strand, Dublin, and witnessed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Rev. Patrick O'Flanagan, C.C., of Aughrim Street, Dublin, Alderman P. W. Corrigan, and the Countess Plunkett. This document showed that, following a slight disturbance in the prison, policemen had been brought in from outside, who entered the cells, batoned the prisoners, and, having manacled them, dragged them downstairs to the basement cells, turned a water hose on them, and left them in wet clothes with their hands fastened behind their backs for three days. Being unable to open their clothes to relieve themselves, the prisoners suffered terribly, and their clothes were in a filthy state. They had to go to Confession and receive Communion still handcuffed, and in this shocking condition, and a number of them were kept in solitary confinement on bread and water for a week afterwards.

The English Government endeavoured to prevent the circulation of Mr. Kenny's statement, but it received widespread publicity in Ireland and created a painful sensation. The matter was raised in the English Parliament, and Mr. Shortt, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, promised an enquiry. It will be shown in the sequel how this promise was kept.

On August 8th the people of Dublin were surprised to find the principal thoroughfares on the North side of Dublin occupied by bodies of soldiers, who held up and searched all vehicles, and examined baskets and parcels. The cause of this was never made public, owing to the English military censorship of the Press. The fact was that some Irish Volunteers had succeeded in seizing a quantity of gelignite, weighing 1,000 lbs., which had just arrived at Amiens Street, and got away with it. A cordon was formed round the neighbourhood, but the gelignite was never recovered. This was the first of many similar coups by Dublin Volunteers. Harry Boland accidentally found himself in the midst of the ensuing " hold up ", but got through safely.

The English Government now resorted to the device of deporting and interning all important sentenced prisoners when they had completed their sentence. They were released and then re-arrested at the jail gates, and conveyed to England. As I have mentioned, it was intended to do this in my case, but when the deportation order was sent to Belfast Prison it was found that " the bird had flown." A couple of months

later Collins ascertained that it was intended to deport Mr. Laurence Ginnell, who was then imprisoned in Mountjoy, when he had completed his sentence. He devised a plan for the rescue of Mr. Ginnell at the jail gates. A party of Volunteers was stationed in the neighbourhood of the gates on the day his release was due, waiting for his appearance. Unfortunately the armed guard on Mr. Ginnell was too strong to allow the rescue to be made without a fight. The Volunteer officer in charge did not proceed with the attempt, and Mr. Ginnell was hustled into a car by detectives and driven away. The incident shows how far the outlook of the Volunteers of 1918 was from that of the Volunteers of 1920. There was a marked reluctance to resort to the use of force involving bloodshed. It was the continued violence of the English Government towards Irishmen that ultimately let loose the guns of the Volunteers, and turned passive resistance and defensive tactics into a very decided and effective offensive.

The English Government still hesitated to enforce Conscription, although there can be no doubt that the military authorities in Ireland had all their preparations made for such an enforcement. The history of the previous twelve months, which I have been relating, has been a history of the blunders of the English Government which helped Sinn Fein. The next move of that Government was a peculiarly comic one. They announced that to give a fresh trial to "voluntary enlistment" a series of public recruiting meetings

would be held in Dublin and elsewhere. In Dublin, Mr. Arthur Lynch, an unstable gentleman, who has been many things and championed many causes in his time, but who at this particular time happened to be out for recruits for England, elected to address the recruiting meetings, assisted by a Captain O'Grady. There was a nice audacity about the idea of appealing to Irishmen to risk their lives as members of the forces that had arrested and imprisoned their political leaders, and were at the time raiding, attacking and imprisoning their fellow-countrymen; but to make this appeal from public platforms at a time when all public meetings by the people of Ireland were strictly prohibited, was the notion of men devoid of a sense of humour. As might be expected the " recruiting meetings " proved a ludicrous fiasco. After three nights of interruption and uproar in Dublin, Mr. Lynch had to abandon his meetings. In Newry the disturbance at a recruiting meeting was so great that the troops had to be called out. Similar scenes occurred in Cork and other towns.

Not a little of the popular exasperation was caused by the tone of those who appealed for recruits, which might be summarised in the phrase—" Come, or we'll make you." A typical example of this attitude is the following recruiting poster which was extensively displayed :—

Will you join as free men, able to choose your unit in the Army, Navy, or Air Force, or will you wait till you have to join, and

have no choice as to where you are sent?
Will you give your quota, or must three
times as many be taken under compulsion?

It was further officially announced that, should the required quota of "voluntary recruits" not be obtained by October 1st, steps to enforce Conscription would immediately be taken on that date. In fact, the information at the disposal of G.H.Q. of the Irish Volunteers led us to anticipate a determined attempt to enforce Conscription on October 1st. It was decided to endeavour to seize the person of Lord French and hold him as a hostage. The arrangements for his capture were in the hands of McKee and Collins, while the arrangements for the accommodation of the prisoner were placed in the hands of Michael Staines. The enquiries which Staines had to make, and the confidences which he had to give in the matter, reached the ears of some indiscreet person, and rumours of gossip about the proposed seizure led to the abandonment of the project. In any case it would have been exceedingly difficult, as the person of Lord French was very carefully guarded.

Another plan was considered of cutting off the light and water supply from the Vice-Regal Lodge, and elaborate plans for this purpose were submitted by Dick McKee. It was felt, however, that this action could not be made sufficiently effective to be worth while.

I take it for granted that the reader does not need to be informed that raids, arrests, courts

martial and imprisonments by the English forces were taking place throughout this period, and continuously from this time to the Truce. It was in 1918 that the then new military machine, the tank, made its first appearance on the streets of Dublin. The sole object of this display was to intimidate people. Tanks were never used in the subsequent warfare, in which they would have been absolutely useless.

It was officially announced by the English authorities in Ireland, on September 20th, that the period for " voluntary recruiting " had been extended from the 1st to the 15th of October, and that, should the required quota not be forthcoming (which seemed certain), the first steps to enforce Conscription would be taken. The reason for the postponement was that the order to enforce Conscription had to be laid on the table of the House of Commons before it could take effect, and Parliament did not meet until October 15th.

The Irish people, having got over their first scare, were not inclined to take these threats seriously, but in treating them as mere " bluff " they were living in a fool's paradise. Collins was satisfied from the information he possessed that very definite steps would be taken to enforce Conscription on October 15th.

The menace of Conscription had caused a boom in recruiting for the Volunteers, whose paper strength was now over 100,000. Only a very small number of these were armed, and some of those who had only joined to protect themselves against Conscription were a doubtful asset.

On the night of October 15th large bodies of military, fully armed and equipped for active service, occupied many public buildings and various points of importance in Dublin city. At 11.30 p.m., on the night in question, the staffs of most of the principal telegraph offices throughout Ireland were ordered to go on duty in their offices, and hold themselves in readiness for any contingency. Next day the military abandoned their various positions without anything having happened. The origin of these manoeuvres remained a mystery. The view of the Volunteers, G.H.Q., as expressed in "An tOglách" at the time, is worth quoting:—

"These military activities were in pursuance of orders previously given, as it had been arranged by the English Government and the military authorities that the Order to enforce Conscription in Ireland should be laid on the table of the House of Commons on that day—the day of the re-assembling of the British Parliament. It was felt, and rightly felt, that the Irish Volunteers would accept the publication of this order as a formal declaration of war, and act accordingly, and the military arrangements were taken with a view to this. The plot to initiate a prolonged and ruthless warfare in Ireland, in the hope of exterminating the most vigorous elements of the population and rendering Ireland impotent, was deliberately planned, and there was no change in the English Government's intentions up to the Cabinet meeting on the Monday. However, the unexpected arrival of

the German Peace Note, and President Wilson's reply to it, creating an entirely new situation, disturbed the plotters, and Mr. Shortt, when questioned about Conscription on the Tuesday, had ' nothing to say.' "

This explanation may not be correct, but no alternative one had been put forward which seems to fit the facts of the case so well. At all events it is important to record how the matter presented itself to the heads of the Irish Volunteers.

The constitution of the Irish Volunteers required the holding of an annual Convention of delegates from each affiliated Company in Ireland. The last Volunteer Convention had been held, as has been mentioned, in October of the previous year, but it was felt that it would be impossible to hold a similar Convention this year without grave risk of discovery and the capture of most of the leaders of the organisation. It was decided instead to hold a meeting of representative officers from all parts of Ireland. A preliminary meeting of the General Executive was held in my office at 25 Parnell Square.

The meeting of officers was summoned to attend in Fleming's Hotel, in Gardiner's Place, but, after a number of the officers had arrived, before the meeting had begun, it was noticed that the place was being surrounded by detectives. Probably some well-known Volunteer officer had been recognised and shadowed from the station. Steps were taken to set the detectives on a false scent, while the Volunteer

officers quietly vacated the building and made their way to the Colmcille Hall, in Blackhall Street, where the meeting was held and lasted some seven hours.

Reports were submitted by the Directors of the various departments. Collins, as Director of Organisation, was able to report that there were some 1,200 affiliated Companies, as compared with 390 at the time of the last Convention. This represented a paper strength of about 100,000 men.

The termination of the European War had brought Sinn Féin's policy of appealing to the Peace Conference to the front. The political side of the Sinn Féin movement, which for some months had been neglected by Collins for the more pressing problems of the military organisation, again began to attract his attention. He resumed attendance at the meetings of the Sinn Féin Executive. The members of that Executive, who had been spared in the round up, were mostly persons who had little personal acquaintance with Collins, and were inclined to regard him as a wild young man, lacking in stability. His brusquerie of manner did not prejudice them in his favour. However, after some experience of working with him on the Committee, they began to realise that he bore a very old head on his young shoulders, and the counsels of the "wild young man" began to carry weight with them.

It was at this time that I met a good priest, who had been our prison chaplain once in England, and was then on holidays in Dublin.

I introduced him to Collins, with whom he had been in correspondence while we were in prison. He laughingly remarked that he had been impressed by the sagacity of the letters he had received from Collins, which seemed to him to breathe of age and mature experience, and was amazed to discover the youthfulness of the writer.

Although so many of our leaders were in jail it was decided to hold the Sinn Fein annual Convention in October as usual. Accordingly, on October 29th, a largely attended Convention of Sinn Fein delegates was held in the Mansion House, under the Presidency of the Acting President, Father Michael O'Flanagan. Collins, Harry Boland, J. J. Walsh, Pádraic O Máille, and I were liable to arrest, but we contrived to attend the Convention with safety by the simple device of entering the building by a back door up a lane at an early hour, and remaining in the Mansion House until the Convention assembled. We took part in the debates while detectives remained outside watching the front entrance for "wanted" men. At a late hour the meeting adjourned to the next day. The detectives remained outside the Mansion House till close on midnight. We whiled away the time playing cards until they departed. Collins took no part in the game, but watched its progress with interest. Finally when the "coast was clear" we departed, arriving at an early hour again for the second day's meeting, which was the final one.

The report of the first day's meeting, which

appeared in the public Press, revealed the fact of the "wanted" men being present; but apparently the Dublin Castle authorities paid no attention to newspaper reports when their own detectives were unable to report having seen the men in question.

The treatment of the Sinn Fein prisoners in Belfast Jail was raised at the Convention. There was at this time a dreadful epidemic of some kind of influenza raging in Ireland which had resulted in many deaths, mostly of the young and vigorous. Not for many years had any epidemic made such ravages in Ireland. In many towns and villages all shops were closed, as there was illness in practically every house. It was reported to the Convention that the epidemic was raging among the Belfast prisoners, that they were not receiving proper care or attention, and that a number of deaths were likely to occur in consequence. The assembly was profoundly moved by the news. Then Harry Boland sprang up and proposed that the entire meeting, men and women, clerics and laymen, should march in a body to College Green, the most central position of the city, and, in defiance of the English Government's proclamation, hold an open air public meeting to protest against the treatment of the Belfast prisoners. The proposal was carried with acclamation, and it was decided to take this action when the assembly adjourned for luncheon.

It was only when his proposal was carried that Boland began to realise all that it implied. The Dublin Castle authorities might or might not

interfere with the meeting ; but it was not likely that their detectives, who were waiting outside the Mansion House, would neglect so fine an opportunity of arresting the wanted men. It should be noted that there was at this time no question of using weapons to resist arrest.

Boland walked over to Collins, who was sitting beside me, and said in a rather subdued voice : "I'm going out with them, Mick." Collins angrily retorted : "So am I." Then, with a gesture of impatience, he rapped out : "For the Lord's sake, will you stop and look ahead before you act next time." He then rose and went out to an ante-room, where Tom Cullen was in waiting, and handed him over his papers, for fear of their being captured.

I sought out Dick Mulcahy, the Chief of Staff, and put the case before him. He had no difficulty in convincing Collins of the folly of risking arrest by going out with the others. Boland, however, felt that, as the public meeting was his own proposition, he was in honour bound to take part in it and share the risk of it, and Mulcahy had to give him a positive order not to go. I think in his heart he was not sorry for this, as he realised he had made a mistake.

The other delegates, at the luncheon interval, marched in a body to College Green, and held the proposed meeting of protest. It attracted large crowds so that the traffic was held up for a considerable time. The Castle authorities did not attempt to interfere with the demonstration, but their Press Censor prohibited all mention of it in the newspapers ;

and, except as far as Dublin was concerned, it might as well have not been held.

It was at this Sinn Fein Convention that Collins first "came out" as a debater. At the previous Sinn Fein and Volunteer Conventions he had hardly opened his mouth, but on this occasion he made several very effective speeches. One of the resolutions passed by the Convention was a demand that the English evacuate Ireland. To this Collins proposed an addendum demanding that England make reparation to Ireland for all the financial robbery and all the damage inflicted by her on Ireland during the past hundred years. The claim was derided by other delegates as an impracticable one, but Collins maintained his point with the utmost pertinacity, and pressed his proposal to a division. The Chairman, in putting it to the meeting, threw cold water on it, and the proposal was defeated. Three years later Collins secured the admission of the principle of Ireland's claim against England in the Treaty, although, after his death, the present heads of the Free State Government have thrown over our claim.

As most of the members of the former Sinn Fein Executive were in prison, it was decided, in order to prevent the election of an Executive largely composed of persons who could not act, to confine candidature for the Executive to those at liberty, but it was agreed that in the event of the release of the prisoners, an extraordinary Convention would be summoned and a fresh election held. The result of the election of the Executive showed a strong pacifist element

among the delegates. Those who were regarded as "moderates" generally received more votes than Volunteers. Cathal Brugha came a long way down the list, a fact which aroused Collins's fierce indignation. "Cathal Brugha is a white man," he declared emphatically. "There he is half-crippled with English bullets, away from the meeting because he is doing work that they would never dare to think of, and they vote for Mr. X. and Mrs. Y. and leave Cathal near the bottom of the list."

It was confidently expected that the end of the European War would be followed by the immediate release of the Sinn Fein prisoners who had been arrested in the round up of May 18th. The pretext for their detention had been the pretended suspicion that they were plotting with Germany, and, now that Germany had surrendered, and, furthermore, that the question of Conscription for Ireland no longer arose, it was felt that their release was inevitable. But the English Government, by continuing to hold the prisoners for many months later, showed how dishonest its pretence of a "German plot" was, its real object being to crush Sinn Fein.

As there was no charge against Harry Boland, Collins, and myself—only a "deportation order"—Harry conceived that all danger of arrest had ended with the termination of the War. A few days later I was in his company in the Sinn Fein Headquarters at 6 Harcourt Street. We had both arrived as usual on bicycles and entered by the back door, which was approached by a labyrinth of lanes. I had still some business

to do, so I remained behind when Harry announced his intention of going home. "I'm finished with the bicycle and the back door," he said. "I'll walk out the front door." He departed and I went on with my work.

Some minutes later he re-entered the room, puffing and panting. When he had emerged from the front door of the building two detectives, who were stationed outside the door, made a dash for him. He ran from them, turned down Montague Street, and, out-distancing them, got down the lane leading to the back entrance, and so re-entered the building. After this Harry realised that, war or peace, he was still "on the run" and would have to continue to take precautions.

On the morning of November 13th, Harry Boland received information that an attack by a pro-English mob would be made on the Sinn Fein headquarters that evening. He gathered a band of about 30 Volunteers armed with sticks and knuckledusters, laid in a stock of stones as missiles, dismissed the staff, and prepared to give the assailants a warm reception. The attack, when it took place, proved of greater magnitude than was expected; it was made, not by a mob, but by a body of 700 soldiers, organised and armed with sticks. The 30 Volunteers held the building against the attackers, and put them to rout after inflicting heavy injuries upon them. None of the garrison suffered any serious injury, and the only damage done to the building was the breaking of the windows by stones; but a very

large number of soldiers were treated for injuries that night at King George's Military Hospital. The publication of the fact was forbidden by the Press Censor.

A sensational incident took place at this time which was to be the forerunner of many similar occurrences. A body of police in Cork went to arrest a Volunteer named Denis MacNellis (an Ulsterman, as his name indicates). MacNellis fired on them, seriously wounding the head constable, and was only captured after a fierce struggle. A few days later, on " Armistice Day," November 11th, he was rescued from Cork Jail by a body of five Volunteers, some of whom gained access to him under the pretence of visiting him, overpowered the warders, and took him away.

Public opinion was not yet prepared to countenance anything more than passive resistance to the English Government, and there were many even among those who regarded themselves as Sinn Fein stalwarts who condemned MacNellis's action. Michael Collins heard these censures with great indignation. " Don't forget," he said to me, " to put something into ' An tOglách ' about ' Bravo, MacNellis ! ' " I was only too glad to do so. MacNellis had simply followed the principle laid down by " An tOglách," that a Volunteer with weapons in his hands should not surrender without a fight.

A meeting of the Sinn Fein Executive, held at 6 Harcourt Street, on November 19th, was attended by Boland, Collins, J. J. Walsh, and myself, all of whom were " wanted " men.

During the course of the meeting one of our scouts reported to us that the entire political detective force and other detectives were stationed outside the building. It was evident that some kind of coup was contemplated.

The meeting proceeded placidly, the other members not being aware of the danger. When the meeting had concluded we allowed the other members to depart, while the four of us remained. The caretaker, Joe Clarke, bolted the door, and put out the lights, but the detectives still remained outside the door. Boland feared that the detectives had discovered the back entrance the night of the fight with the soldiers. We stole out of the back door in the darkness—it was a stable door—and listened. We satisfied ourselves that there were detectives stationed at this door, and that we were surrounded. Collins ascertained afterwards that there were only two detectives at this door, and they were both friends of his, so that we could have safely gone out; but at the time we did not know that. There was nothing to do but to go up to the caretaker's sitting room, where we made ourselves as comfortable as we could, and waited for the departure of the detectives. We thought it wiser to put out all lights. Nothing could exceed the feverish impatience of Collins at this temporary imprisonment, interfering with his plans and work.

While the others of us reposed on chairs, and tried to sleep, he paced about like a caged lion, cursing the delay, and peered out of the front windows every now and then to see had the

detectives departed. But they remained on vigil all the night. At length at about six in the morning Collins, after one of his journeys to the front window, came back and declared triumphantly—"They're gone!"

We proceeded down to the hall, unbolted the door, and emerged with our bicycles. As we were mounting them some detectives appeared at the door of a publichouse at the corner of Cuffe Street. Weary and thirsty from their all-night vigil they had aroused the publican and entered the place for a drink, sure that there was nobody in the building they were watching.

Collins jumped on his bicycle and cycled right past them down Stephen's Green. Harry Boland, Walsh and I cycled down Montague Street, Harry taunting them with the farewell cry of "Up the Rebels!"

Later that day No. 6 Harcourt Street was raided by police and military, and Robert Brennan, who had succeeded Mr. James O'Mara as Director of Elections, was arrested, deported and interned.

CHAPTER XII.

Dáil Éireann

December, 1918—January, 1919

WHEN the English Government decided, on the termination of the European War, to hold a General Election, it was confidently expected in Ireland that the Irish prisoners interned in England, many of whom were prospective candidates, would be released previous to the Election.

Instead of doing this the English Government made a fresh arrest and deportation—of the Sinn Fein Director of Elections—thus showing the purely political object of the internments. The order to arrest Collins and the other “wanted” men still held good; but Collins ascertained that an order was also issued that those of them who were candidates for election should not be arrested during the election in their own constituencies.

The General Election gave Sinn Fein the opportunity of carrying out its programme of establishing a National Assembly of elected representatives, to meet in Dublin, refuse to recognise the English Parliament, and claim to function as a *de jure* Government.

This was the key-stone of the Sinn Fein political programme, and, coming at the time it did, the election also gave a prospect of an appeal to the Peace Conference by the elected representatives of the Irish people, which had been a plank of the Sinn Fein platform in the recent by-elections. To attain this object, however, Sinn Fein had to contest some eighty seats with the Irish Parliamentary Party. The feeling of the country was so unmistakeably behind Sinn Fein, that there were supporters of the Party who believed nothing would be gained by their forcing a fight, and that it would be a good policy to stand down and give Sinn Fein a chance. Several members of the Party declined to stand for re-election.

Mr. John Dillon, speaking at a meeting of the United Irish League, in Dublin, on November 22nd, referred to proposals which had been made to him for a Conference between Sinn Fein and his Party in order to prevent a contest at the General Election, and declared emphatically—"We will fight Sinn Fein with all the resources at our disposal." Later in his speech he said—"We offer the people a policy which has been tried for 40 years with unparalleled success"—a good illustration of Mr. Dillon's notorious lack of a sense of humour. The "success" of a Home Rule Movement, which had "been tried for 40 years" without producing Home Rule, was certainly "unparalleled."

Although Michael Collins was still working only behind the scenes, and had attained little or no prominence, he was sufficiently known in

his native district to be selected as Sinn Fein candidate for South Cork. He issued his election address in Irish and English, but he was unable to visit South Cork during the election owing to the more pressing claims of his work in Dublin. The victory of Sinn Fein in South Cork was regarded as certain.

On the advent of the General Election the order prohibiting the holding of public meetings without a permit was withdrawn by the English Government. In furtherance of the Sinn Fein campaign in Dublin a monster public meeting was held in O'Connell Street, at which addresses were delivered from three platforms. The great street was thronged from the Rotunda to the Pillar by a dense crowd of people, and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. Collins and I delivered speeches from a brake stationed near the Pillar, and it was amusing to us to see in the forefront of the surging crowds around the wagon some of the detectives who had been hunting us for months, looking helplessly on. Of course it would have been as much as their lives were worth to have attempted to arrest us; but nobody interfered with them. In front of Collins as he spoke stood Hoey, a detective with a peculiarly bad record, who had gone out of his way to secure victims for execution after the Easter Week Insurrection. In the following year Hoey was shot dead outside the Police Headquarters in Brunswick Street.

This was the first appearance of Michael Collins as a speaker at a Dublin public meeting—and the last until the Truce.

The Sinn Fein Executive found themselves confronted by a difficulty with regard to those constituencies in Ulster—eight in number—where the Catholics and Nationalists possessed only a small majority. It was pointed out that, in the event of a contest between Sinn Fein and the Irish Parliamentary Party in these constituencies, the Catholic vote would be split, and there was a danger that Unionists would be returned—a particularly undesirable contingency. Cardinal Logue and other distinguished ecclesiastics demanded insistently that Sinn Fein and the Party should come to some arrangement so as to avoid three-cornered contests in these constituencies. The Cardinal proposed an even division of the seats between the Parties.

The view of the Sinn Fein Executive was that the matter should be arranged by holding in each constituency a plebiscite of Catholic and non-Unionist voters to decide whether a Sinn Fein or Party candidate should go up ; and that whoever secured a majority should be supported by the united votes of the two Parties. This seemed the most reasonable and democratic way of settling the difficulty, as any deal between Party leaders over the heads of the electors was manifestly unfair. The principle of a plebiscite was approved at a Conference of Sinn Fein representatives from the constituencies affected, held in Dungannon.

Mr. Eoin MacNéill had been appointed as their representative by the Sinn Fein Executive, and the Ulster Catholic Bishops urged a conference between him and Mr. John Dillon.

Mr. MacNeill accordingly met Mr. Dillon, with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, on December 3rd, to discuss the situation, having received clear instructions from the Sinn Fein Executive to oppose any deal over the heads of the electors. The astonishment of the Sinn Fein Executive, and the anger of Boland, may be imagined when the three gentlemen issued the following official statement :—

“ That the Conference has agreed that the following eight seats should be dealt with in accordance with the suggestions of the Bishops of Ulster—S. Fermanagh, S. Down, Derry City, N.W. Tyrone, N.E. Tyrone, E. Donegal, S. Armagh, and E. Down. That these seats should be divided equally between the two parties, four to Sinn Fein, and four to the Constitutionalists ; that on the question of the allocation of the eight seats the Conference has failed to agree, and in these circumstances it was decided to refer the matter to Cardinal Logue, and that the full influence of the Conference should be used to support the decision.”

(Signed) LAURENCE O'NEILL.
JOHN DILLON.
EOIN MACNEILL.

There was, of course, nothing for it but to make the best of a bad job. Pending a special meeting of the Executive, as the nominations had to be lodged on the following day, instructions were sent that all constituencies in Ulster were

to be contested by Sinn Fein. Party candidates were also nominated for the eight seats in question. Subsequently Cardinal Logue issued a statement, allocating South Down, East Tyrone, East Donegal and South Armagh to the Parliamentary Party, and Derry City, East Down, North-West Tyrone, and South Fermanagh to Sinn Fein. A special meeting of the Executive of Sinn Fein reluctantly agreed to accept this undemocratic decision, for which their representative had made them responsible, but it was held very strongly by some, at least, that Mr. MacNeill had exceeded his instructions. The candidature of the Sinn Fein nominees for the former four constituencies was not proceeded with.

In the election campaign that ensued all the energy and enthusiasm was on the side of Sinn Fein. The followers of the Party showed themselves apathetic and dispirited—so much so, that in many constituencies it was impossible to find Party candidates. On nomination day no less than 26 Sinn Fein candidates were returned unopposed. Michael Collins was one of these; others were Arthur Griffith, Eamonn De Valera, Austin Stack, Terence MacSwiney, and Liam Mellows. I was also among the number.

A noteworthy incident of the election campaign was the appearance on a Sinn Fein platform in Rathmines of Mr. Tim Healy, now Governor General of the Free State.

When the result of the General Election became known, it was found that Sinn Fein had won all but two seats outside North-East Ulster,

and that in all Ireland the Parliamentary Party had only won two seats against Sinn Fein—the Falls Division of Belfast, where Mr. Joseph Devlin easily defeated Mr. De Valera (there had never been any doubt of this result), and Waterford City, where Captain Redmond, son of Mr. John Redmond, had again defeated Dr. White, though by a reduced majority. In Rathmines there was a three-cornered contest in which Sir Maurice Dockrell, a popular Unionist, was successful.

It had been the policy of Sinn Fein to put forward candidates for all the Ulster Seats (except the four allotted by agreement to the Party), even where there was an overwhelmingly Unionist majority.

In all Sinn Fein won 73 seats, while the Unionists retained 26, all but one of which were in North-East Ulster. The Irish Party came out of the General Election with only six seats in Ireland, of which four had been secured by them by agreement with Sinn Fein—and with only one seat outside Ulster.

Surely seldom if ever in history was there such a devastating defeat for a Party that only two and a half years previously had dominated political life in their country, and was followed unquestioningly by the vast majority of the people. Before the Easter Week Insurrection the Party would probably have won every seat in Ireland from Sinn Fein; now there was none so poor to do it reverence.

This result must not be taken as indicating a sudden and complete conversion of the Irish

people to Republicanism. The basis of all national and patriotic movements in Ireland, whether "moderate" or "extreme," political or cultural, had been a desire for a separate national existence for Ireland, independent of England; but the majority of the people had no reasoned political theories on the subject, and were always most interested in the removal of those grievances or disabilities which weighed most heavily on them. The desire of nationhood had been allowed, no doubt foolishly, to crystallise itself into the formula of Home Rule. The betrayal of Home Rule by the English Government, the surrender to Carsonite threats, and the obvious weakness of the Party, the heroism and sacrifices of Easter Week, and the subsequent coercion and persecution by the English Government, had changed the mind of the people; and the passing of the Conscription Act had proved the final blow.

The vote at the General Election of 1918 was largely an anti-Irish Party vote, and also a gesture of protest against the English Government's actions in Ireland. It was felt that the policy of a national appeal to the Peace Conference, in which the United States would have so powerful a voice, should be given a trial.

It is a remarkable fact that of the 69 Sinn Fein candidates returned at this election, 36 were at the time in prison, three were compulsory exiles, and six were evading arrest.*

The influenza epidemic already referred to had not resulted in any deaths among the prisoners

* See Appendix A.

in Belfast, but on the 9th December came news of the death, from influenza, of one of the Irish prisoners interned at Usk Prison, in England—Richard Coleman, of Swords, Co. Dublin, a young Volunteer officer who had taken part in the Easter Week Insurrection, and subsequently been among the Portland and Lewes “convicts.” The body of this gallant young man was brought to Dublin, and a public funeral was accorded to him, at which an immense concourse took part. Michael Collins marched in the funeral procession wearing the uniform of a Volunteer officer.

Prior to the funeral the Chief Commissioner of Police had asked, through the Lord Mayor of Dublin, that there should be no uniforms worn, and no firing party at the grave. This demand was scornfully refused, and full military honours were accorded the dead man. A number of detectives hung about the neighbourhood of Glasnevin, and it was thought that there would be an attempt to make arrests after the ceremony, but nothing happened.

At Christmas time an extraordinary situation arose in Belfast Jail, where the majority of the sentenced political prisoners were confined. A young Volunteer, named John Doran, was brought to the prison, to whom the authorities refused to grant treatment as a political prisoner, insisting on putting him on the same terms as a criminal. Doran was a peculiarly fine type of Volunteer, a respectable young farmer of Co. Down, and this indignity to which he was subjected evoked the sympathy and indignation of the Sinn Fein prisoners. The prisoners, under the leadership

of Austin Stack, conceived a daring plot for his rescue. He was located in a separate wing, among ordinary criminals, but all prisoners were assembled each morning in the chapel. When they were leaving the chapel the other Sinn Fein prisoners surrounded Doran and brought him with them to their own wing, where preparations had been made for defence. They retired to the upper ward, broke away the staircases, barricaded themselves, and refused to hand over Doran unless they got a guarantee that he would be treated in the same way as themselves. They had accumulated a quantity of heavy iron weights and other missiles, which they threatened to hurl at anybody who should attempt to attack them. For days they held the authorities at bay, and created a sensation in the Orange city of Belfast by appearing on the roof daily, waving Republican flags, singing "A Soldier's Song," and other patriotic anthems, and shouting Republican war cries to the irate Orange crowds who were gathered in the street outside.

The authorities were at their wits' end what to do. The prisoners had been accumulating stores of food in anticipation of the coup, and were able to withstand a blockade for a considerable time; and it was impossible to capture their positions without bloodshed. The military were called in, and an ultimatum was served on the prisoners, giving them twelve hours to hand over Doran, but the prisoners treated the ultimatum with derision. The Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and Dr. MacRory, Catholic Bishop of Down and

Connor, interested themselves in the matter with a view to preventing bloodshed. Ultimately, on December 31st, after four days of revolt, a conference was arranged between Austin Stack, representing the prisoners, and the prison authorities, and an agreement came to which was, in effect, a complete victory for the prisoners. The agreement was made public and ran as follows :—

“The prisoner Doran to be handed over on condition that he should not be treated as a criminal, the Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Bishop giving an undertaking to that effect ; the prisoners to be restored to the political rights which they obtained before the recent outbreak of influenza, viz., receiving visits, parcels, letters, etc. The third condition is that the prisoners be removed from Belfast Jail as soon as the necessary preparations shall have been made for their internment elsewhere.”

It may be observed here that the third condition was not honourably observed by the English Government, and the second was abrogated at an early date.

Early in the new year Collins learned from his agents in the “G.” Division that the orders to arrest himself, Boland, J. J. Walsh, and myself were withdrawn, and for the time being we ceased to be “on the run.” It was destined, however, to be only a very short respite for any of us.

On January 11th Mr. Shortt was succeeded by Mr. Ian Macpherson, as English Chief Secretary

for Ireland. The newcomer, a Gaelic-speaking Scot, distinguished himself by his anti-Irish rancour. His attitude throughout his tenure of office was that of a man constantly in a passion. There was something which we found very comic in the futile fury of all Mr. Macpherson's public utterances with regard to Sinn Féin.

The newly elected Sinn Féin representatives first met in private in the Mansion House on January 7th, and held two subsequent meetings, at each of which Michael Collins was present. Meanwhile a committee was appointed to make arrangements for the public assembly of Dail Eireann. It fell to the lot of this body to draft a provisional Constitution, a "declaration of independence," and prepare all the other matter for the agenda of a meeting that was to establish a native Government in Ireland. It is a source of pride to me to have played a considerable part in the arrangements for what proved to be a dramatic historical event. Most of the work fell on George Gavan Duffy and Sean T. O'Kelly, and useful assistance was also given by Con Collins, J. J. Walsh, and James O'Mara.

The public assembly of Dail Eireann was fixed for January 21st, and the Irish public looked forward to the occasion with the most intense interest. It was my suggestion that Cathal Brugha should preside, and it proved a very happy decision. It was felt very strongly that the proceedings on this historic occasion should be conducted entirely in the native language.

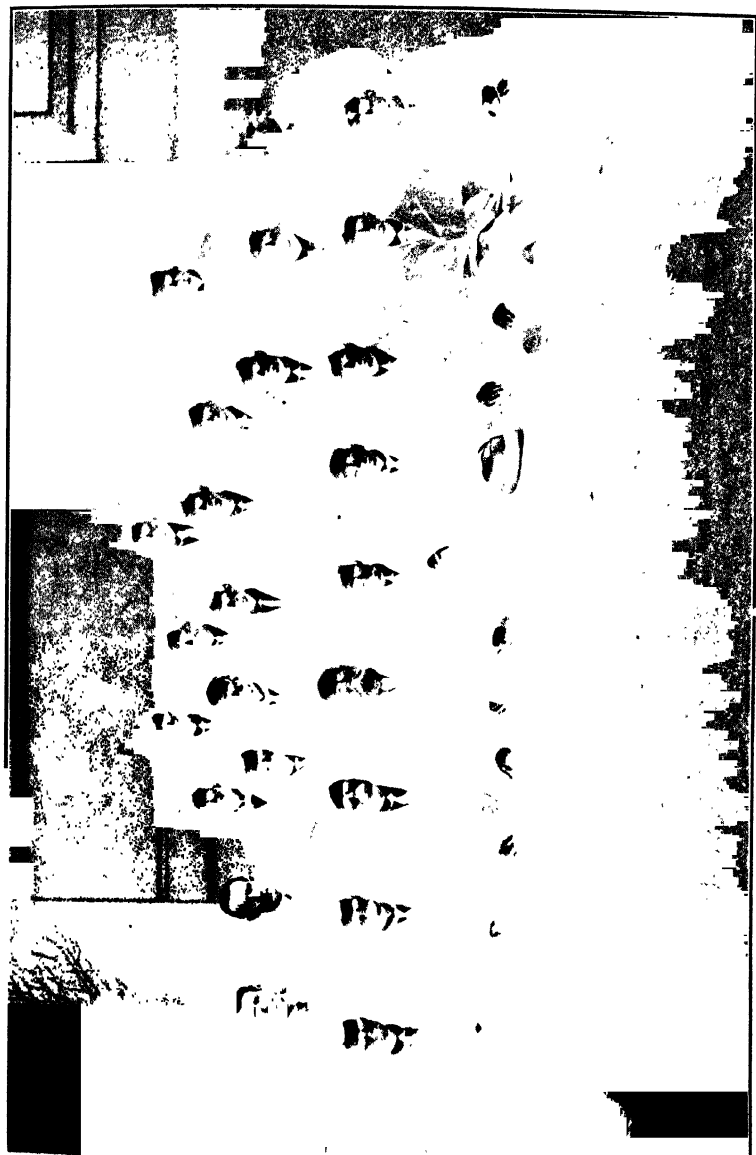
At this very moment Collins and Boland were engaged in a secret task which absorbed all their

energies. The nature of this task will be explained in the next chapter. When Dail Eireann assembled they were both absent in England, and it was essential that their absence should not be noticed. We, therefore, arranged that other members should answer to their names when the roll was called. This device was completely successful. Hardly anybody missed them, and the newspapers recorded them as present. Even the official Dail report, subsequently printed, records them as present, though on the last page of the report appears under the heading "Corrigenda":—

“ San Rolla i n-ionad
 ‘ Micheál O Coileáin i láthair ’
 ba cheart ‘ Micheál O Coileáin as láthair ’
 agus i n-ionad
 ‘ Enrí O Beoláin i láthair ’
 ba cheart ‘ Enrí O Beoláin as láthair ’.”

(In the list of attendances for “ Michael Collins, present,” read “ Michael Collins, absent ”; and for “ Henry Boland, present,” read “ Henry Boland, absent.”)

It had been decided to send invitations to attend Dail Eireann to all who had been elected for Irish constituencies, including Unionists, and the survivors of the Parliamentary Party, although it was well known that both the latter would ignore the invitation. Dail Eireann assembled in the Round Room of the Mansion House, a splendid chamber of mighty dimensions. Large as it was, its accommodation was overtaxed by



MEMBERS OF FIRST DAIL EIREANN, JANUARY 21st, 1919.

spectators, and there were enormous crowds outside the Mansion House unable to gain admission.

Of the 69 members elected only 27 were able to attend, the majority of those absent being in prison. Cathal Brugha presided over the assembly with solemn dignity, and the proceedings were in every way most impressive. Diarmuid O'Hegarty, who had been compelled to resign his position in the Department of Agriculture by the enforcement of a decree requiring civil servants to take an oath of allegiance to England, acted as Chief Clerk to the Dail.

The proceedings opened with a prayer by Father Michael O'Flanagan, after which the Ceann Comhairle, or Chairman, proceeded to call the roll, not omitting any of the names of Unionists or Irish Party representatives to whom invitations had been sent. A very striking feature of this roll call was the number of names to which one of the Clerks (Sean Nunan) replied—"Fé ghlais ag Gallaibh" ("Imprisoned by the English").

The Provisional Constitution was then read by the Chairman. Its principal feature was that it provided for an Executive or Ministry of five—a President, elected by the Dail, and four Ministers nominated by the President, subject to the vote of the Dail, the Ministers of Finance, of Home Affairs, of Foreign Affairs, and of Defence. This was the genesis of the later Constitution of Dail Eireann. Mr. James O'Meara had much to do with the drafting of the scheme, which was based on practical common sense. We realised that for an Executive we would

require a President, a man to take charge of administration (Home Minister), a man to take charge of money matters (Finance Minister), and a man to take responsibility for the activities of the Irish Volunteers, who, it was taken for granted, would, in accordance with the principles of their constitution, accept the authority of a Parliament freely elected by the people of Ireland. The office of Foreign Minister was, of course, only an ornamental one, and intended chiefly as a gesture indicating our claim to international status. It would have been absurd, out of the small number of members at liberty, to appoint a larger Executive.

The title of the State was given as "the Irish Republic" in the English language, and "**Saorstát Éireann**" in Irish. **The title "Saorstát Éireann" remained the official name from that time forward.**

The "Declaration of Independence" was then read in Irish by the Chairman, in French by George Gavan Duffy, and in English by Eamonn Duggan. For the original drafts in French and English the credit belongs entirely to Gavan Duffy, whose draft was accepted by the Committee with only a few minor alterations. For the Irish version I was responsible.

The acceptance of the Declaration of Independence was then proposed by Cathal Brugha and seconded by me, after which all the deputies rose to their feet and, raising the right hands, pledged themselves, in Irish, to endeavour to make it effective by every means in their power.

Pádraic O Máille then proposed the appointment

of Eamonn De Valera, Arthur Griffith, and Count Plunkett as our delegates to the Peace Conference. This was seconded by Dr. James Ryan, and agreed to. A "Message to the Free Nations of the World" was then read in Irish by J. J. O'Kelly, in French by Count Plunkett (who had just been released from internment owing to ill health), and in English by Robert Barton. A "Democratic Programme," which had been drafted in consultation with the leaders of the Irish Labour Party, was then read by me in Irish, and by Alderman Tom Kelly in English, proposed by Richard Mulcahy, seconded by Con Collins, and agreed to. The Dail then adjourned to meet in private Session on the morrow.

The "Democratic Programme," it may be remarked, was of a very radical nature, so much so, that it is doubtful whether a majority of the members would have voted for it, without amendment, had there been any immediate prospect of putting it into force. Many would probably have objected to the communistic flavour of the declaration, quoted as "the language of our first President, Pádraic Mac Phiarais" (P. H. Pearse), that "the Nation's sovereignty extends, not only to all the men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil, and all its resources, all the wealth, and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation," and that "all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare." If any charge of insincerity could be made against this first Dail it would be on this score.

The proceedings throughout were marked with the utmost decorum. The packed throng of enthusiastic spectators were requested not to disturb the proceedings by applause, and this request was rigidly obeyed.

The question which everybody asked was :— What is the English Government going to do about it? Apart from the release of the Lewes prisoners, and the abortive hand-picked "Convention," the policy of the English Government in Ireland for the previous two years could be summed up in one word—"Coercion"—or in a phrase used by Lord Birkenhead about this time :—"We shall use force, and yet more force." So flagrant a defiance of English authority as the setting up of a native parliament, and the formal declaration of independence could not, it was thought, pass unchallenged; and yet, in view of the peaceful nature of the process, and the overwhelming popular support of the Dail, it was possible that the English Government would think it expedient to ignore it, especially as the Dail did not seem to be in a position to enforce the authority it claimed. As a matter of fact the English Government wavered, as they had several times done before, and were several times again to do, between a new policy of conciliation and more coercion, and on this occasion, as always, came down on the side of more coercion.

Lord Haldane arrived secretly in Ireland to sound avenues of approach to "a settlement." He sought to have it conveyed to Irish leaders that, if "extreme claims" and "violent

methods " were abandoned, the Irish prisoners in England would be immediately released, and that immediately on the re-assembling of the English Parliament a "generous measure of Home Rule" would be introduced by the Government.

Lord Haldane does not seem to have got very far with his " feelers." He returned to England without any apparent tangible result, and the prisoners were still kept under lock and key.

Meanwhile the Dail deputies who were still at liberty met again privately and elected Cathal Brugha as acting President. Cathal proceeded to nominate his Ministers—Michael Collins for Home Affairs, Eoin MacNeill for Finance, Count Plunkett for Foreign Affairs, and Richard Mulcahy for Defence.

Collins was at the time absent in England with Boland, but his appointment as a Minister caused no surprise. Even those who least liked him had learned to recognise his wonderful energy and capacity.

Cathal Brugha had not yet become estranged from Collins, and, in his position as Chief of Staff, had learned how indispensable a man his young colleague was.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Chapter of Escapes

January— March, 1919

THE Irishmen interned in English prisons had looked forward confidently to their release on the termination of the European War. Their disappointment as Christmas approached without any sign of their being set free may be imagined.

Eamonn De Valera, who had been interned in Lincoln Prison, had begun to cherish thoughts of escape. The prison was peculiar among English prisons in having, besides the main entrance, a door in the wall surrounding one of the exercise grounds which apparently gave access to the outside world. If a key for this door could be secured an escape was perhaps possible.

De Valera noticed that the prison chaplain, for whom he served Mass, sometimes carelessly left his keys lying about, and he succeeded in making an impression, with the wax of a candle, of the wards of the key with which the chaplain used to let himself in and out. The next problem was how to send out a facsimile of this impression to friends outside.

The approach of Christmas suggested an

ingenious idea to the prisoners. Sean Milroy, who was also in Lincoln, drew on a postcard a humorous double picture of "Christmas 1917 and Christmas 1918." Under the former head was shown one of the prisoners, in a state of intoxication, endeavouring vainly to insert his latchkey in the hall door of his house with the inscription:—"I can't get in!" In the companion picture the same prisoner was shown in a prison cell, holding a giant key in his hands, with the legend beneath:—"I can't get out!" This picture was smuggled out to a friend in Sheffield with an accompanying letter. The point was that the key was a facsimile of the impression taken by De Valera of the chaplain's key.

Their Sheffield friend, being nervous, sent on the picture to Dublin, but destroyed the explanatory letter. The picture was regarded as only a joke, and further measures were required before its significance was understood. A message in Irish was smuggled out and reached Paddy O'Donoghue, of Manchester, another of the men who were in touch with and working for Collins. O'Donoghue brought the message across to Ireland and delivered it to Collins at Mrs. MacGarry's. Michael Collins, having interpreted it, with the aid of Con Collins who was also present, at once got busy on the matter.

A key was made, from the directions given, by Gerald Boland, Harry's brother, and was baked in a cake by Mrs. MacGarry, and Collins "superintended the icing of the cake." The

cake was sent into Lincoln Prison as a "gift" to the prisoners, but the key proved too small. From further directions O'Donoghue got a fresh key made by a man whom he knew, who was in the employ of a well-known Manchester firm of locksmiths. The key and a file were also baked into a cake in Manchester by a Mrs. O'Sullivan, and the cake was brought to Lincoln by an Irish girl resident in Manchester, a Miss Talty.

Those few outside the prison who were in the secret waited with tense anxiety for the result. O'Donoghue, accompanied by Frank Kelly, a young man employed in Sinn Fein Headquarters, spent two or three days in Lincoln making observations. They satisfied themselves that the door in the wall gave access to the fields outside the prison, and consequently, if the key would work, that escape was possible.

Collins also visited Lincoln, and he and Boland at length gave themselves up altogether to the work of the rescue. It was this that was responsible for their absence from the opening Session of Dail Eireann, and the steps we had to take to prevent this absence being noticed. They stopped most of the time in Manchester with O'Donoghue, who kept a provision shop in Greenheys, Manchester.

At length word was received from the prisoners that the second key was a failure. Fresh directions were given, and steps were taken to fabricate a fresh key. Before this work could be completed a further message was received asking them not to finish the key, but to send it in in the rough. This was accordingly done.

One of the prisoners, Alderman De Loughrey (afterwards a member of the Senate), had some acquaintance with the locksmith's art, and had contrived to dissect the lock of a disused cell. He discovered that there was a quadruple lock, and that the chaplain's key was not a master key. With the materials smuggled in (also baked in a cake) he contrived to fabricate a master key which seemed likely to serve the purpose.

It was at this moment that Sean Etchingham, one of the Lincoln prisoners, who was dangerously ill, was released, and returned to Dublin. Collins got word that Etchingham had a message for him and hurried back to Dublin from England. I remember well his sudden arrival, bursting travel-stained and worn, into a room in Harcourt Street where Con Collins and I were working, with the cry "Where's Etchingham?" We were unable to tell him. He stormed at Con Collins for not having located him. He must have succeeded in finding him, for he returned to England that night.

The situation was complicated at this moment by the escape from Usk Prison (on January 22nd) of four Irish prisoners—Joe McGrath, Frank Sholdice, Barney Mellowes, and George Geraghty. These prisoners succeeded in escaping without any assistance from outside. They fabricated a rope ladder from towels and firewood, attached iron hooks to it, and succeeded, by pushing it up with a pole, in attaching it to the top of the wall surrounding the prison. By this means they scaled the wall and walked to Newport, a distance of fourteen miles. The

internees were not permitted to have any money, but the four escaped men had contrived to get some through the blundering of an official, and were able to pay their fare to Liverpool, where they were among friends.

Collins learned of the escape from Usk with consternation. He feared that the result would be to put the prison authorities on the alert, and render the escape from Lincoln impracticable, but this fear proved groundless.

The escape was finally fixed for February 3rd, and it was arranged that Sean MacGarry and Sean Milroy were to accompany De Valera.

Collins, Boland and O'Donoghue duly arrived in Lincoln on the required date. O'Donoghue had hired a taxi in Newark, telling the driver that he was going to Lincoln to pick up a party of friends and bring them back to Newark to dine. The driver had no suspicion of the work on which he was engaged; he only knew O'Donoghue as a traveller who had hired his car on a few previous occasions.

After dark Collins and Boland, accompanied by Frank Kelly, proceeded to the fields in the rear of the prison. To get off in the main road they had to cut their way through some barbed wire entanglements, and this they did without difficulty, but Kelly got lost in the dark fields, and the others lay down in a field within sight of the prison window. It was arranged that at the appointed hour they would signal to the prisoners that they were ready by flashing a lamp, and that the prisoners should reply by lighting matches at a window.

At the appointed time the signal was given and replied to, and Collins and Boland rose and proceeded to the door. When they reached it they found that outside the door there was a second iron gate. Collins had brought a duplicate key with him, and this he inserted in the gate. It fitted in easily enough, but, when he attempted to turn it, it broke off in the lock. At the same moment the door at the other side of the gate swung open, and they could see De Valera, MacGarry and Milroy on the other side; but all egress was barred to them by the gate with the broken key in the lock.

Boland, in describing the scene to me, dwelt on the feeling of utter despair which seized on him at this juncture. Collins said, in a heart-broken tone, "I've broken a key in the lock, Dev." De Valera uttered an ejaculation, and tried to thrust his own key into the lock from the other side. By an extraordinary piece of luck he succeeded in pushing out the broken key with his own, and opening the gate.

They made their way across the fields, passing some soldiers off duty, whom Boland greeted with "Cheerio, mates!" and walked to Lincoln. Here the three escaped captives were put into the taxi with O'Donoghue, while Collins and Boland proceeded to London by train.

O'Donoghue brought the party to a hotel in Newark, where he dismissed the driver. Then, when the driver was gone they walked across the street to where Fintan Murphy (already mentioned in connection with the Frongoch struggle) had another taxi ready. O'Donoghue

ordered the driver to go to Sheffield. The driver pointed out that, under the petrol restriction regulations in force at the time, he could not convey passengers to Sheffield while it was possible to go there by train. O'Donoghue found it hard to answer this argument, but he insisted on the car proceeding to Sheffield, and the driver reluctantly consented.

At Sheffield Liam MacMahon was waiting with a private motor car with which they completed their journey to Manchester. De Valera was taken to a popular Irish priest's house in Manchester, and Milroy and MacGarry were housed by MacMahon. They were rejoined next day by Boland.

At this time large crowds were travelling by train to Liverpool from Manchester for the Waterloo Cup Coursing Match, and advantage was taken of this to bring Milroy and MacGarry up to Liverpool, where Neill Kerr took charge of them, and lodged them with a Mrs. MacCarthy. De Valera stayed in Manchester for nearly three weeks before he also went to Liverpool.

Collins spent the following day transacting business in London. He arrived in Liverpool some time after eight o'clock on the following evening after having been 36 hours without food. He proceeded straight to Neill Kerr's house with the intention of staying there for the night, but learning that one of the sailor friends was crossing to Dublin that night, he decided, weary as he was, to continue his journey. About midnight Kerr accompanied him to the boat which was lying in the Nelson Dock. To enter

at that hour they had to pass through a wicket in the gate, guarded by a policeman and a Customs officer, but these were accustomed to seamen and ship's officers passing through to their ships at such unseasonable hours, and passed them in without question, probably impressed by Kerr's seamanlike appearance. Three detectives, however, who were watching the Irish boat, saw the two men from a distance. By the time they reached the boat Collins was safely aboard and stowed away. They inquired for the two mysterious men who had gone aboard at that hour, but nobody could give them any information, and a search failed to locate the two men or anybody answering to the description. When they were gone Kerr went ashore, and approaching the gate innocently asked the policeman if "the last train had gone," declaring that he had stayed too late on board seeing a friend off.

At the next meeting of G.H.Q., presided over by Cathal Brugha, Collins reported that De Valera was determined to go immediately to the United States. This statement was received by all of us with dismay. We felt that De Valera's departure would be a fatal mistake, that the country would misunderstand his motives, and regard it as a selfish or even cowardly desertion. When this view was expressed, Collins replied:—"I told him so, but you know what it is to try to argue with Dev. He says he has thought it all out while in prison, and that he feels that the one place where he can be useful to Ireland is in America."

We discussed the matter at some length, and all felt very strongly that the place of the leader of an Irish movement was in Ireland, and that the amount of sympathy and help we received from America would be determined by the strength and energy of the fight we put up in Ireland. Finally it was decided that Cathal Brugha would go to England and urge De Valera to remain, or, at least, if he was determined to go to America, to return to Ireland first, and show himself there, in order that the prestige gained by the Lincoln escape should not be lost. Cathal Brugha accordingly went to England, and succeeded in persuading De Valera not to go straight to America, but first to return to Ireland.

At this, the first meeting of G.H.Q. of the Irish Volunteers, after the establishment of Dail Eireann, Cathal Brugha pointed out that a new situation had arisen, and new methods must be employed. He pointed out that the Volunteers had now become the Army of a lawfully constituted Government, elected by the people, and were entitled morally and legally, when on the execution of their duty, to slay the officials and agents of the foreign invader who was waging war upon our native Government. He also declared that we were entitled to put to death all spies, informers, and all Irishmen who acted as agents of the foreigners in the warfare against us.

Up to this the general policy of the reorganised Volunteers since Easter Week had been one of passive resistance, or at most

defensive warfare. For over two years they had remained patient in face of much police violence, many shootings and killings of citizens, thousands of raids and arrests, bayonet and baton charges, suppressions of newspapers, and prohibition of public meetings. There had been a few isolated incidents, like the attack on a police hut at Gortatlea, Co. Kerry; an armed attack on police in Co. Clare; MacNellis's armed resistance to arrest, described in the eleventh chapter; and the shooting of two policemen at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary, on January 21st; but, considering the provocation offered, such incidents were surprisingly few. Public exasperation had not yet reached the breaking point, and many Sinn Feiners were strongly adverse to any kind of bloodshed. It took six months more of drastic coercion to bring about a change in public feeling.

I have mentioned the fact that MacNellis's plucky resistance to arrest, and shooting of a police sergeant, though approved of by Headquarters, was condemned by many Sinn Feiners. At Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary, a cart containing gelignite for blasting purposes, which was being brought to the local quarry, guarded by two policemen, was held up by a band of Volunteers, who seized the gelignite, and, on the policemen offering resistance, shot them dead. Dan Breen, who took part in this affair, refers to it in his book as "the first shots fired after the Insurrection of 1916." This is, of course, quite inaccurate. There had been several shooting affrays between Volunteers and the police in

1918, in which wounds had been inflicted on either side ; nor was it even the first occasion when policemen were killed. There can be no doubt that many Sinn Feiners, rather illogically, were shocked at the occurrence, although it was among our premises that the English had no right to Ireland, and that when Irishmen acted as their armed agents against their countrymen, they were acting as traitors. General Headquarters, at all events, uttered no disapprobation of the act, and the official organ of the Volunteers, in its February issue, published a letter from a prominent Volunteer, Eamonn O'Dwyer, then in prison, in answer to the "Tipperary Star," which had expressed horror at the shooting. The letter said :—

"The Editor of the 'Star' did not howl his horror of the attempt by the police and military to kill young Maher, of Inch, at Drumbane, near Thurles, last summer. This boy of 16 was cycling on the roadway when he met with a crowd of the peelers and some English soldiers. When called on to halt the boy either got excited over the unlooked for and blustering order, or could not control his cycle, as he was speeding downhill at the time. At any rate the ruffians commenced shooting at him. He was seriously wounded, but managed to get out of range of the cowardly bullies, and has, after months of illness, consequent on a dangerous wound, come back to health and hope again. Several others have been fired on in the same locality, Seamus

Leahy, of Thurles, being the latest to escape such polite attention by murderously inclined peelers. Poor young Maher, Leahy, or the others had not weapons to defend themselves with. The 'Star' did not condemn those incidents. . . .

"The men who seized the explosives at Soloheadbeg risked their lives for Ireland in order to get war material to assist and defend Ireland's freedom. In self-defence they had to slay two of the armed enemy, and the true men and women of Ireland are proud of their bravery. By such deeds are tyrants terrified and bullies held in check."

I have quoted this publication because an entirely erroneous impression has been given by Dan Breen's book that the various acts of warfare by the Irish Volunteers, which followed the establishment of Dail Eireann, were the work of a number of unauthorised gunmen, who forced a situation which had not been approved or sanctioned by G.H.Q. or Dail Eireann. If this had been the case, it would have been a fact discreditable to Ireland, and the Irish people. It was only a couple of days after the establishment of Dail Eireann that the then Acting President, Cathal Brugha, laid before General Headquarters principles which were unanimously approved and embodied in the following editorial which appeared in the next issue of "An tOglách" on January 31st, 1919 :—

“ The principal means at the command of the Irish people is the Army of Ireland, and that Army will be true to its trust. Whatever it is called on by its responsible leaders to do in defence of the rights of the people, in assertion of the nation’s will, in making the establishment of the Irish Republic effective, in supporting the authority of the Irish Republican Government, the Army of Ireland will do without fear or hesitation.

“ If they are called on to shed their blood in defence of the new-born Republic, they will not shrink from the sacrifice. For the authority of the nation is behind them, embodied in a lawfully constituted authority whose moral sanction every theologian must recognise, an authority claiming the same right to inflict death on the enemies of the Irish State, as every free national government claims in such a case. Dail Eireann, in its message to the Free Nations of the World, declares a ‘state of war’ to exist between Ireland and England, a fact which has been recognised and acted on by the Volunteers almost from their inception ; it further declares that that state of war can never be ended until the English military invader evacuates our country.

“ We have thus a clear issue laid down, not by any body that could be termed ‘ militarists ’ or ‘ extremists,’ but by the accredited representatives of the Irish people met in solemn session, in a document drawn up with the utmost care and a full sense of responsibility, and unanimously adopted.

“The ‘state of war,’ which is thus declared to exist, renders the National Army the most important national service of the moment. It justifies Irish Volunteers in treating the armed forces of the enemy—whether soldiers or policemen—exactly as a National Army would treat the members of an invading army. It is necessary that this point should be clearly grasped by Volunteers.

“Every Volunteer is entitled, morally and legally, when in the execution of his military duties, to use all legitimate methods of warfare against the soldiers and policemen of the English usurper, and to slay them if it is necessary to do so in order to overcome their resistance. He is not only entitled but bound to resist all attempts to disarm him. In this position he has the authority of the nation behind him, now constituted in concrete form.”

In the next issue, “An tOglách” declared editorially :—

“The Irish Government claims the same power and authority as any other lawfully constituted Government; it sanctions the employment by the Irish Volunteers of the most drastic measures against the enemies of Ireland. The soldiers and police of the invader are liable to be treated exactly as invading enemy soldiers would be treated by the native army of any country.

“England must be given the choice between

evacuating the country and holding it by a foreign garrison, with a perpetual state of war in existence. She must be made to realise that a state of war is not healthy for her. The agents of England in this country must be made to realise that it is not safe for them to try to 'carry on' in opposition to the Irish Government and the declared wishes of the people. In particular any policeman, soldier, judge, warder, or official, from the English Lord Lieutenant downwards, must be made to understand that it is not wise for him to distinguish himself by undue 'zeal' in the service of England in Ireland, nor in his opposition to the Irish Republic."

These editorials, written by me, embodied the ideas expressed by Cathal Brugha, then Acting President of Dail Eireann. They were submitted to G.H.Q. before publication, and unanimously approved. Nobody who read them could complain of any ambiguity in the attitude of G.H.Q.

As far as the situation could be said to have been forced in the direction of bloodshed, it was forced solely by the violence of the English Government. Dail Eireann attempted to function peaceably, with the approval of the majority of the people, and there was a disinclination for some time to resort to drastic measures; but the attempted suppression of the National Government, the raids, arrests, and outrages, forced the Volunteers more and more to extreme measures. The last passage quoted from "An

tOglách" proved a remarkably accurate anticipation of the trend of affairs.

As to the attitude of Dail Eireann and its Ministry, it need only be pointed out that Cathal Brugha, first as the Acting President of Dail Eireann, and later as Minister of Defence, was responsible to the Ministry and the Dail, and accepted entire responsibility for all the acts of warfare of the Irish Volunteers; that sums of money were voted to the Ministry of Defence regularly by the unanimous vote of the Dail; that verbal reports of the activities of the Volunteers were submitted by the Minister at every meeting of the Dail; that it was open to any Deputy on any of these occasions to ask any question or raise any objection he wished to the war policy of the Volunteers; and that on no occasion did any Minister or Deputy express dissent from that policy except at a meeting held in January, 1921. On that occasion, as will be shown, two members, and two only, Roger Sweetman and Liam de Roiste, objected to the war policy of the Volunteers, but every other member was emphatically in favour of it, and the decision of the Dail was virtually to give the Volunteers a free hand.

As to the attitude of Michael Collins, it is sufficient to say that he was neither more nor less "extreme" than any other member of Headquarters Staff. He was always ready to applaud courageous actions, and was particularly keen in his appreciation of MacNellis; he was always in favour of a "forward" policy, always full of daring schemes, which were usually brought

to a triumphant conclusion, and contributed far more than any other man to the waging of an effective war against the English. But, for the policy which led to the warfare of 1920 and 1921 all members of Headquarters Staff share the responsibility, and the Ministry and Members of Dail Eireann gave it their tacit approval. There never was any difference of opinion among themselves on the part of the Executive or Headquarters Staff of the Volunteers as to our war policy, except when, in the end of 1919, and later in 1920, Cathal Brugha put forward propositions which we were not prepared to stand for, and then all the members of the Executive and Headquarters Staff were unanimous in opposing the proposals.

A particularly scandalous sequel to the Soloheadbeg shooting was the kidnapping of a little boy named Connors by the R.I.C., his parents being kept in ignorance of his whereabouts. The poor child was kept in custody for a considerable period, the police apparently hoping to worm out from him some information with regard to the men concerned in the Soloheadbeg shooting. Ultimately his parents brought an action against the police for the kidnapping, and recovered damages.

The English Government had promised a judicial enquiry into the complaints of brutal ill-treatment made by the Belfast prisoners in August. Now, after several months' delay, a Special Commission, presided over by Mr. Justice Dodd, was constituted to hear evidence on the matter. Eamonn Duggan was the solicitor

selected by the prisoners to represent them. On their behalf he asked for a guarantee that any of the evidence at the enquiry could be published in the Press without interference by the Censor. This guarantee was refused, and thereupon Mr. Duggan, on behalf of the prisoners, declined to recognise any such hole-and-corner "enquiry," or offer any evidence. The farce of a pretended "enquiry" was solemnly gone through, the prisoners not being represented, nor any evidence being offered on their behalf, and, accepting the "evidence" of their own officials, against whom the charges were made, the Commission issued a whitewashing "finding." One of the phrases of this precious finding indicates the outlook of its authors. The handcuffing of the Sinn Fein prisoners, who were left in this state for days, was described as "a salutary restraint." This wonderful "enquiry" was one of Mr. MacPherson's felicities, and he was justly proud of it, and quoted its "findings," when further allegations of ill-treatment of prisoners were made by American delegates to Ireland in the following May.

Previous to Easter Week it had been usual, on or about the anniversary of the death of Robert Emmet, to hold a Commemoration Concert. These concerts were organised by the I.R.B., under the guise of the "Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee." It was decided this year to revive the commemoration, and a concert was arranged to be held in the Mansion House on March 4th, at which, it was announced, in addition to the musical items, a lecture would be

delivered by a "well-known Republican." The large audience, who thronged the great Round Room of the Mansion House, were treated to an unexpected thrill when, the doors having been locked, the lecturer appeared on the platform, and proved to be Sean MacGarry, one of the men who had recently escaped from Lincoln Jail. He delivered his lecture and disappeared, and the detectives who were waiting outside the Mansion House only learned of his presence from the newspapers next day.

On the same night I was arrested in College Street by a body of detectives and ordinary policemen. I resisted as strenuously as I could, but got no assistance from the crowd, who were ignorant of my identity. I mention this arrest because it had a remarkable sequel.

The indignation which the people of Ireland felt at the continued detention of the "German plot" Irish prisoners, was further aggravated by the death, on March 6th, of one of the internees in Gloucester Prison, Pierce MacCan, from influenza. There had been a revival of this dreadful epidemic, which was again playing havoc in Ireland, and to a less extent in England, and taking heavy toll of the lives of the young and vigorous. Pierce MacCan belonged to a well-known and respected family in Co. Tipperary, and was a young man of great promise, an ardent Gael, generous, unselfish, and enthusiastic, and his untimely death moved public feeling profoundly. The body was brought back to his native place and buried in Dualla, amid signs

of general grief. Cathal Brugha delivered a moving oration in Irish at his graveside.

The death of Pierce MacCan seemed to force the issue of the release of the Irish prisoners to a head. On the night of his death Mr. MacPherson announced that it had been "decided to release the Irish political prisoners at present interned in England." This decision had been delayed for months after the last shadow of excuse for their detention had been removed. It is interesting to note that Michael Collins was appointed member of a delegation appointed by Sinn Fein to receive the prisoners.

The release of the other internees seemed to free De Valera from the danger of arrest, and it was publicly announced by the Sinn Fein Executive that he would return at once to Ireland, and that he would be offered a public welcome. The announcement added that it was "expected the the home-coming of De Valera will be an occasion of national rejoicing," and that "the Lord Mayor will receive him at the gates of the City and will escort him to the Mansion House."

The hot-tempered Mr. MacPherson received this announcement with fury, and immediately issued a "proclamation" against the proposed demonstration. The proclamation was, of course, signed by Lieut.-General Shaw, Commander-in-Chief of the English Forces in Ireland, but Mr. MacPherson, speaking on the subject in Parliament, made it clear that the decision was his. There were those who held the view that it was the duty of Dail Eireann to accept the challenge and endeavour to hold the reception in

defiance of the military force threatened against them, paralleling it with O'Connell's famous proclaimed Clontarf meeting. De Valera, however, did not hold that view, and there were many difficulties in the matter, not one of the least of which was the attitude of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. In a letter to the Sinn Fein Executive, the publication of which was prohibited by the Censor, De Valera explained his reasons for the abandonment of the proposed demonstration. He said :—

“ A CHAIRDE,

“ As I anticipated when I learned of the public reception, the alien military forces in occupation of the country proclaimed it. I am sure you also expected it. It is obvious that our English Government could not allow foreign correspondents and others to get such a clear insight into the real position of Ireland, which your proposed demonstration would give. The contrast between how the people would receive government by their own, and government by the foreigner, would be too sharp. It would never do that the peoples of other countries should be forced to ask themselves how it was that men whom the *de facto* government of Ireland branded as criminals, and put away as dangerous, should be received by the people with such evident marks of their approbation. The reply would be much too disconcerting for the champions of democratic rights, and for the defenders of small nations. Think of what a shock it would

give to those who believed English ministers when they echoed America's cry—'Government with the consent of the governed,' and 'an end to military despotism everywhere!' Besides the present moment would never suit at all. Think of Egypt and India, and even British Labour itself. No oligarchs could stand it. 'British justice,' too, and the very great Magna Charta—why, to use the famous word, it would be 'unthinkable.' Hence the usual proof—General Shaw's 'five million arguments, each armed with a bayonet.'

"I would not, of course, waste a messenger in sending you the above. I write to request that you will not now persist in your idea. We are as the Belgians when Belgium was occupied by German troops, and my advice to the people of Ireland would be precisely that of Cardinal Mercier to the Belgians.

"I know that English agents will put their complexion on your drawing back—do not let that trouble you too much. It will be but an extra drop in the ocean of lies they have given forth already. There are many other ways in which the people of Ireland can demonstrate their will, if there should be any necessity for it at all, seeing the result of the general election, and I think you must all agree with me that the present occasion is scarcely one on which we would be justified in risking the lives of the citizens. I am certain it would not.

"Honest men everywhere will understand the position, and England's proclamation, with its accompanying military preparations, will

teach as much to those who are willing to be taught as would your demonstration. Men who are not honest, and those who do not wish to understand, will help our cause very little. So we need not consider them.

"I am sure you will all feel as I do. We who have waited know how to wait. Many a heavy fish is caught even with a fine line if the angler is patient.

"Mise,

"Is mor meas orraibh,

"EAMON DE VALERA.

"P.S.—I am sending another note to the Lord Mayor. But please inform him independently."

When I was arrested on March 4th, I was lodged in Mountjoy Prison, where I had for fellow-prisoners Robert Barton, William Sears, and J. J. Walsh, all, like myself, members of Dail Eireann. Barton had been arrested for a speech in which he threatened reprisals for the reported ill-treatment of prisoners in Mountjoy, and mentioned the names of certain prominent persons on whom reprisals would be executed.

On account of our position as elected representatives, the Prison Governor did not place us in ordinary cells, but in cells in the prison hospital, a separate building in the rear of the prison. My cell was a corner one on the

ground floor, and I had not been in it a day before I realised that all I needed was a file to cut through a bar of the window in order to escape. Accordingly I wrote a letter to Collins, informing him of the project, and giving an elaborate description, with the plans of the interior of the prison. The reply was conveyed to me verbally by Barton, who told me that he had already been working on a similar plan, and had got in a file and a coil of rope, and that G.H.Q. thought it better he should proceed with his project without further complications. I was aware, before I was arrested, that a plan for a general escape of prisoners from Mountjoy was under consideration, and I readily agreed to wait for this, and help Barton in his separate escape.

His cell was located on the highest storey (hence the necessity for the coil of rope), but an outbreak of influenza among the prisoners located in adjacent cells afforded us a good excuse for demanding his removal to the floor. This demand was conceded by the prison authorities, and he was placed in a cell between J. J. Walsh and Sears, who occupied the next cell to me.

At this time Mountjoy Prison was in a state of continual uproar, and there was once again great agitation outside over the treatment of political prisoners in it. These disturbances had begun with the arrival in the prison of Patrick Fleming, a remarkable young man, of whom it is now necessary to give some account.

Patrick Fleming, a native of Leix, was sentenced

to five years penal servitude by courtmartial in March, 1917, on the charge of attempting to purchase arms and ammunition from an English soldier. He was sent to Maryboro' Convict Prison, which was the only prison in Ireland for those sentenced to penal servitude. Here he was treated in the same way as the most atrocious criminals. Hearing of the Mountjoy hunger strike, and the death of Ashe, he also went on hunger strike, and was released in November, 1917. He was re-arrested in the big round-up in May, 1918, and brought back to Maryboro' Prison. Here it was sought again to subject him to treatment as a criminal, but he put up a strenuous resistance. He refused to wear prison clothes, even when all others were taken from him. When forcibly dressed in convict garb he tore it to tatters. When handcuffed he contrived to break the handcuffs. Every resource of cruelty and cunning was employed to break his spirit, but in vain. It is doubtful if there is any other case on record of such an extraordinary fight against brute force and daily physical and mental torture as this gentle mannered young man put up for many months. Several times he was brought to the verge of death; but the spirit lived on unbroken in the feeble frame. He became an expert in a new art, which later came to be known among Irish prisoners as "smashing up." Not content with passive resistance, he systematically destroyed all articles in his cell, and, as fast as they were replaced, worked free from hand cuffs and muffs, and wrought fresh destruction.

At length the prison authorities had a cell specially constructed for him, at a heavy cost, of what they conceived unbreakable materials. Every source of ingenuity was employed in the building of the cell to baffle the prisoner's destructive protests, but his ingenuity and perseverance triumphed, and the costly "unbreakable" cell became a wreck.

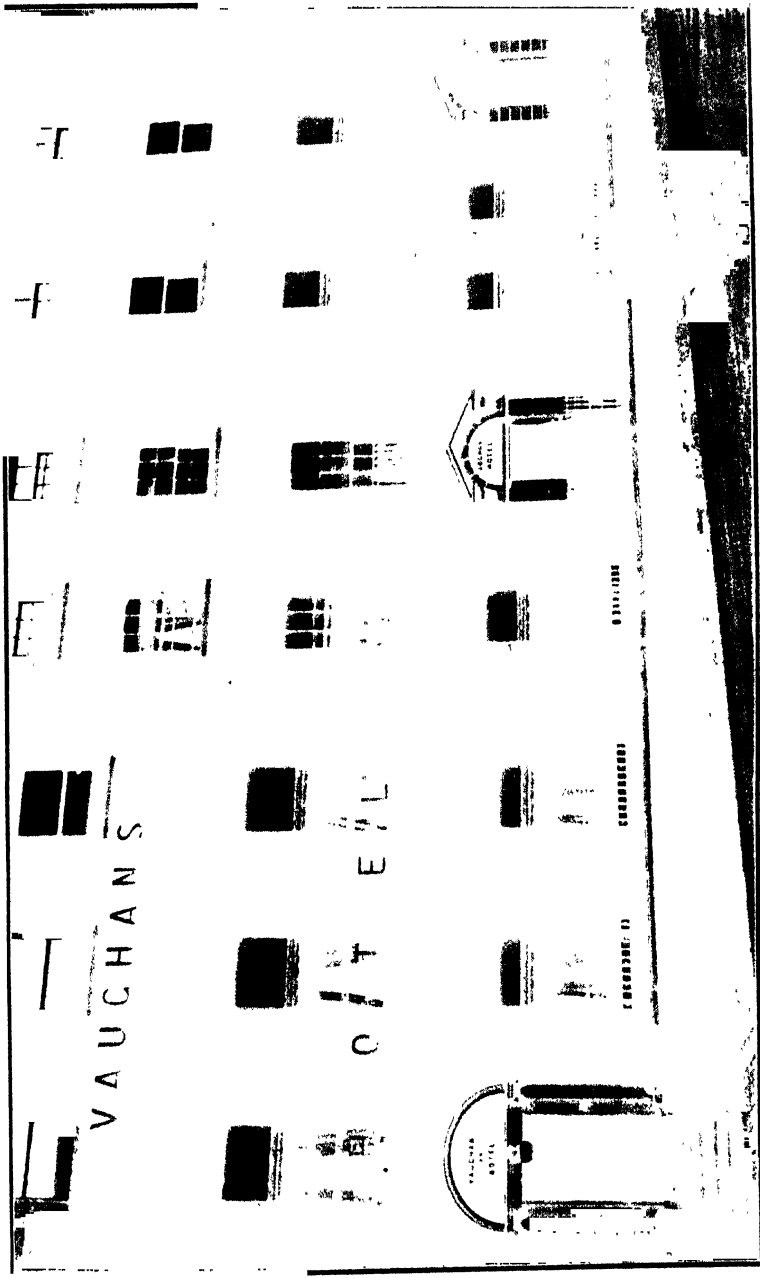
At length the prison authorities were compelled to make terms with their indomitable prisoner, and, as Christmas, 1918, approached, to agree to "a truce." Finally it was realised that it was hopeless to try to get Fleming to submit to treatment as a criminal. It was necessary to give him the status of a political prisoner. The difficulty they encountered was that the regulations for the treatment of political prisoners, introduced after the hunger strike of 1917, only applied to prisoners sentenced to two years or less; and Fleming's sentence placed him in a different category. To get over this difficulty his sentence was *reduced to two years*, and he was sent to Mountjoy. Thus, after over a year of single-handed struggle against seemingly invincible force, he gained a double victory.

When Fleming arrived in Mountjoy he found himself associated with a number of other political prisoners who were getting all the privileges won by the 1917 hunger strike. He speedily became the leader of these men, and, though hardly recovered from an illness brought on by his long struggle, initiated a fresh agitation on behalf of four Irish political prisoners in the jail, who were being treated as criminals. On their behalf

he started a "strike" among the other prisoners, and "smashing up" tactics were resorted to with the result that the prisoners were kept in handcuffs for several weeks. During this time Fleming arranged a weekly "truce" with the authorities for the Saturday and Sunday. Meanwhile a plan for a general escape had been considered by G.H.Q., and ultimately it was decided to abandon the strike in order to enable the plan to be carried out. It was at this time that I arrived in the prison. Although there was no strike on, "scenes" between prisoners and prison officials were of daily occurrence, and the prison authorities, under the strain and stress of the prolonged conflict, were inclined to avoid trouble by giving the prisoners considerable latitude. This rendered the prospect of escape easier.

Barton, having been removed to a ground floor cell, sawed through a bar in his window in about three nights, without attracting attention, and escaped on the night of March 16th. He gave the final strokes to his work on the evening of that day while Sears, J. J. Walsh, and I were having tea with him in Walsh's cell. He rigged up a dummy figure in his bed, so that any warder who looked through the spy-hole during the night would imagine he was still there.

The hospital was just beside the back wall of the prison, a wall twenty feet high, which separated him from the back of the Royal Canal. It was a night of bright moonlight, but no warder, policeman or soldier (there was a guard of police and soldiers in the prison) saw the



VAUGHAN'S HOTEL.

figure glide across to the wall. He threw a piece of soap over as a signal, and Volunteers on the other side threw over a weight with a rope attached. He caught the rope and pulled over a rope ladder, with which he ascended the wall. From the top he jumped into an outspread blanket, and landed without mishap. He was taken to the house of Batt O'Connor, 1 Brendan Road, Donnybrook, already mentioned in this narrative. All the arrangements for his escape had been carried out by Michael Collins.

Batt. O'Connor records that, when he expressed his delight in the achievement to Collins, he replied:—"That's only the beginning. We're going to get Beaslai and Fleming out next." In fact, at this time, he was sending letters to me continually in which he discussed plans of escape.

The original plan, which had been devised for the benefit of Fleming and the four prisoners who were being treated as criminals, was that, when they were exercising in the field adjoining the wall near the canal banks, a breach should be made in the wall by an explosive, through which the prisoners could escape, steps being taken for their safety when once outside. The objection to this plan was that there was a guard of soldiers and armed policemen stationed in the prison, and the noise of the explosion was sure to bring them on the scene immediately. It was decided to try a more noiseless method. There were some political prisoners who had only short sentences to serve. It was decided that, on a given signal, these should "hold up" the warders, while the

others scaled the wall by means of a rope ladder thrown from the outside. A list was made of the prisoners who were to escape, in the order in which they were to go. I was to go first, then Fleming, then J. J. Walsh, and then the four prisoners who had been the cause of all the trouble. I do not think the list exceeded twelve. It was not believed that so many could get away before the alarm was given and the guard arrived, but it was considered that the first five or six had a good chance. The event far exceeded our anticipations.

A prisoner named Paddy Daly (afterwards commanding officer of "the Squad," and later a Major General in the National Army) was placed by Fleming in charge of the prisoners who elected to remain.

As a prisoner awaiting trial I was entitled to see a solicitor privately, and I availed myself of this privilege to have several interviews with Eamonn Duggan, at which various details in connection with the escape were arranged.

The escape was fixed for March 29th, just thirteen days after Barton's departure. As the day drew near an unexpected difficulty arose. The "strike" against prison regulations had been abandoned, as has been mentioned, in order to render an escape feasible. The four prisoners, whose treatment had been the cause of the trouble, were aware of this, and reluctantly acquiesced in submitting to criminal treatment for the time being. At length, not being aware that the date for the escape had been definitely fixed, they grew restive, and on the Monday

broke away from the warders in charge of them, and gave them a long chase around the field before they were captured. Next day, at exercise hour, they were only permitted to take their exercise inside a kind of iron cage, with a guard of no less than eleven warders, and the same precaution was observed on the following day. This seemed to render their chance of escape very slight, while the presence of so many warders presented a serious obstacle to the escape of the other prisoners also. However, it was decided to go on with the attempt, and the four prisoners declared that if the rope were thrown over the wall they would undertake to break through their guard of eleven warders and get to it.

However, so desperate a measure was not required. The prisoners, by Fleming's orders, kept so quiet for the next few days that the prison officials were lulled into a sense of false security. The day fixed for the escape was a Saturday, and the hour 3 p.m. The prisoners were locked up for their dinner at 1 p.m., and let out for exercise at 2.30. During this period a prisoner signalled from a window to a Volunteer stationed in Claude Road, to let those outside know that all was ready.

At this juncture a snowstorm came on, and it looked as if the prisoners would not be let out for exercise at all. Fortunately the snowstorm cleared up at about half-past two, and we were all let out. There were three parties of us—J. J. Walsh and I, who exercised in front of the hospital, the bulk of the political prisoners under

Fleming, who exercised in a field just inside the wall, and the four prisoners in the "iron cage." To our delight, when we came out, we found that the guard of eleven on these men had been reduced to three. The military guard and police were stationed in the front of the prison, and it would take them some time to get round. We had only got seven unarmed warders to deal with.

Fleming crossed over from his comrades to J. J. Walsh and myself, and the three of us took up a position where we could have a view both of the wall and the "iron cage." The different parties were not allowed by the rules to associate with one another, but the prison officials had long given up all hope of compelling Fleming to submit to such rules. Not five minutes before the escape the Deputy Governor passed by and made some remark to Fleming and us about being out of bounds. Fleming replied with a jest, and the Deputy Governor thought it wise to say no more, and passed on. He was hardly out of sight when the signal—a whistle—was heard from outside.

The bulk of the prisoners ran to the selected point in the wall, at the rear of the hospital. Fleming, Walsh and I joined them, and the four men in the cage broke through their guard and made their way to us. Meanwhile five prisoners, who were told off for the purpose, went up to the warders, and, putting their hands in their pockets, pretended to be covering them with revolvers, and ordered them not to speak or stir. The warders obeyed. The supposed revolvers were

simply the heads of horn spoons which were served out to the prisoners.

Meanwhile Peadar Clancy, who was outside on the canal bank, threw over a weight with a rope attached, and we pulled over a rope ladder. Paddy Daly took his place at the front of it, and called out the names of the prisoners in the order in which they were to go. I went first, followed by Fleming and J. J. Walsh. We ran along the canal bank and down an entry into Innisfallen Parade, where Sean Nunan and others were waiting with bicycles. Dick McKee and Rory O'Connor had charge of the arrangements.

The escape exceeded our most sanguine expectations. No less than twenty prisoners escaped. There were several who had quite made up their mind to stay behind, having only short sentences to serve, but were unable to withstand the temptation of the dangling rope ladder. Only seven prisoners were left behind—one for each warder. Just as the last prisoner crossed the wall the military guard came rushing up with fixed bayonets. Daly lined up his men, and they greeted the soldiers with a derisive cheer. All the escaped men got away safely, some of them on bicycles, some by tram. The moment they got out in the streets among the people they were made safe, for everybody befriended them. Such was the famous daylight escape from Mountjoy, which seemed the culmination of a series of bloodless triumphs for the Irish Volunteers.

CHAPTER XIV.

Minister for Finance

April, 1919

DE VALERA, having abandoned the idea of a public reception in Dublin, returned to Ireland quietly, even secretly. On April 1st Dail Eireann met in private session in the Mansion House, the attendance being reinforced by a large number of those deputies released from English prisons. J. J. Walsh and I, just escaped from Mountjoy Prison, contrived to attend the meeting by the usual device of entering the Mansion House early, before the detectives arrived on the scene, and waiting inside until they had left. Another "wanted" man who attended was Pádraic O Máille; and Michael Collins, after nearly three months of unrestricted movements, was again "on the run." A few days previously an order for his arrest had been issued, owing to his failure to appear at the Spring Assizes in Derry to answer to the charge in connection with which he had given bail in the previous year. From this time until the Truce, on July 11th, 1921, an interval of two years and four months, Collins had to add to the difficulties of his work the problem of evading capture.

Dail Eireann met again in private session on April 3rd, and again on April 4th. The brief outline of the Constitution, adopted at the first session of the Dail, was further elaborated, and a number of amendments suggested by De Valera were incorporated in it. The most noteworthy change was the substitution for a Ministry of five, of a Ministry of nine, with the addition of "extern Ministers," who should not be members of the Cabinet. This last provision is now embodied in the Constitution of the Irish Free State.

De Valera was elected President or Prime Minister ("Príomh-Aire") of Dail Eireann—not "of the Irish Republic," as has often been ignorantly asserted. It was manifest that Dail Eireann could not arrogate to itself the right of electing a "President of the Irish Republic." The Constitution made the position of the Príomh-Aire quite clear. Dail Eireann was defined as the supreme legislative power, and the Aireacht or Ministry as the supreme executive power; the Aireacht consisted of the Príomh-Aire, or Prime Minister, elected by the Dail, and other Ministers nominated by the Príomh-Aire and ratified by vote by the Dail.

In accordance with this Constitution De Valera was unanimously elected Príomh-Aire, and nominated eight other Ministers to constitute the Executive, his nominations being unanimously approved by the Dail. The most noteworthy change was the appointment of Michael Collins as Minister of Finance. The other Ministers were :—Arthur Griffith, Minister of Home Affairs ;

Cathal Brugha, Minister of Defence; Count Plunkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs; W. T. Cosgrave, Minister of Local Government; the Countess Marckievicz, Minister of Labour; Eoin MacNeill, Minister of Industries; and Robert Barton, Minister of Agriculture. Some of these appointments were rather in the nature of window-dressing. The most essential departments were Home Affairs, Finance, Defence and Local Government, and, to a lesser degree, Agriculture. Mr. Ernest Blythe was appointed an "extern Minister," with the title of Director of Trade. The appointment of Mr. MacNeill to the post of "Minister of Industries" (a subject in which he had no experience, and had never shown any interest), was explained by the following passage in a report of the Trade Director, submitted to the Dail in August, 1921:—"When a discussion took place on the fact that trade and industrial matters were so closely inter-related that it seemed to be a case of having two Ministers for one department, Mr. MacNeill stated that it was his intention to leave all industrial matters to the Department of Trade, and that he had agreed to join the Ministry for political reasons."

Mr. Ginnell was appointed Director of Propaganda, a post which he had shortly to resign owing to ill-health. He was succeeded by Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald. Mr. Sean Etchingham was appointed Director of Fisheries.

About a month earlier, Mr. Sean T. O'Kelly, who had not been interfered with by the English Government in the "German Plot" round up or subsequently, succeeded in obtaining

a passport to France, and, arriving in Paris, opened an "Irish Embassy" there, with the authority of Dail Eireann, and began to conduct a vigorous propaganda on behalf of the Irish cause. He was later joined by Mr. George Gavan Duffy. The French Government was decidedly unfriendly to the Irish delegates, but they succeeded in making the claims and grievances of Ireland much better known than before in France, and on the Continent generally. At the same time Dr. MacCartan became the regularly accredited representative of Dail Eireann in the United States, and an "embassy" was established in Washington.

On April 8th an "extraordinary Ard-Fheis," or Convention, of the Sinn Fein organisation was held in the Mansion House, in accordance with the agreement come to at the annual Convention that a special Ard-Fheis would be summoned in case the prisoners in England were released. There was a large attendance of delegates from all over the country, and once again the "wanted" men succeeded in getting to and from the meeting safely by the usual methods. The proceedings lasted two days, and Collins took a prominent part in the debates.

One of the matters discussed was a proposal that members of the "Royal Irish Constabulary" should be socially ostracised. It was decided that this should be done by a decree of Dail Eireann.

On the next day, April 10th, a public session of Dail Eireann was held, and large crowds of spectators sought admission to the Mansion

House. At about nine o'clock Collins and I, having slept at Vaughan's Hotel on the previous night, proceeded on our bicycles to the Mansion House. When we entered Molesworth Street, with a view to approaching the lane which gave access to the back door of the Mansion House, we were seen by a detective stationed at the corner of Molesworth Street and Dawson Street. We put on speed and cycled down the lane, but just as we reached the back door the detective reached the top of the lane and saw us enter. This event had a noteworthy sequel.

At the outset of the public session De Valera, speaking in Irish and English, made what purported to be a Ministerial statement, but gave little indication of what the Dail or its Executive proposed to do, or the lines on which they intended to proceed. The outlook was far from clear, and it was no doubt necessary to avoid committing ourselves to much at the outset, but the country would certainly have welcomed something more definite. The nearest he came to defining the policy of the new Government was in the following three paragraphs, the last of which is, I think, a masterpiece of studied vagueness :—

“ In order to secure for our own *de jure* government, and for the Irish Republic which the Irish people have willed to set up, the necessary international recognition, we shall send at once our accredited representatives to Paris, to the Peace Conference, and to the League of Nations. We shall give them all necessary authority, and that they may proceed

there in a manner befitting their character as the representatives of a nation, we shall apply for the necessary safe conduct to enable them to pass through the naval and military cordons with which the power in occupation of our country has surrounded us.

“ We shall send also to other countries a number of duly accredited ambassadors and consuls, to see that the position of Ireland is understood as it truly is, and not as English propaganda would represent it, and in general to see that the interests of Ireland in these countries are in no way neglected. We shall thus resume that intercourse with other peoples which befits us as a separate nation, that intercourse which it has been the chief aim of English statescraft to cut off, and which, indeed, English power has succeeded in cutting off for over a century.

“ At the present time of general world reconstruction, it is most important that the material interests of this country at home be also looked after, and by Irishmen. It will be the duty of our Ministry to secure the co-operation and to co-ordinate the activities of the various bodies which have taken voluntarily on themselves the safeguarding and advancement of these interests. Towards English legislation interfering with these interests we shall act in accordance with the general principles I have already indicated, that is, we shall act as we think best for the general good.”

Having then referred in a couple of sentences to the various Ministries, without defining their duties, he made the one definite statement with regard to the Department of Michael Collins, as follows :—

“ It is obvious that the work of our Government cannot be carried on without funds. The Minister of Finance is accordingly preparing a prospectus, which will shortly be published, for the issue of a loan of one million sterling—£500,000 to be offered to the public for immediate subscription, £250,000 at home, and £250,000 abroad, in bonds of such amounts as to meet the needs of the small subscriber.”

The “ debate ” which followed was conducted entirely in Irish, the speakers being Pádraic O Máille, Liam de Róiste, Con Collins, Ernest Blythe, Terence MacSwiney, Brian O’Higgins, Richard Mulcahy, and myself. It was a rather dreary, solemn farce. All the speakers praised the *Príomh-Aire* and each other, and talked generalities. Feeling disgusted with the atmosphere of mutual admiration, I felt compelled, while expressing my complete confidence in the Executive, to refer mildly to my dissatisfaction with the nebulous vagueness of the Presidential statement.

When the Dail adjourned for the luncheon hour Collins, J. J. Walsh, Pádraic O Máille and I were about to lunch, our food having been sent in from an adjoining restaurant, when Collins

was called to the telephone. The speaker was Broy of the "G" Division, but he declined to deliver his message in English, preferring to speak French for safety. Neither Collins nor De Valera felt competent to converse in French, and I was summoned to take the message. Broy stated that the police authorities had reported that certain wanted men were in the Mansion House, and had asked for the assistance of sufficient military to surround the building and raid it.

On hearing this De Valera advised Collins to leave the building at once, but he answered cheerily: "We'll have our lunch first." He took the precaution, however, of having some Volunteers stationed in the vicinity of the back entrance as scouts. We finished our lunch without any undue hurry, and the four "wanted" men left in a body. As we expected, there were detectives stationed within sight of the back door, but under the circumstances they did not think it judicious to interfere with us.

We did not return for the afternoon session, and our departure was apparently duly reported, for there was no raid or interference with the assembly. The principal feature of this session was a statement by Arthur Griffith on the ill-treatment of Irish prisoners, and other outrages by the English Government. A decree, proposed by De Valera and seconded by Eoin MacNeill, "that members of the police forces acting in this country as part of the forces of the British occupation and as agents of the British Government be ostracised socially by the people of Ireland," was unanimously agreed to. I shall

have more to say of this decree at a later date.

Undeterred by the danger, Collins again gained access to the Mansion House on the following day in order to attend the final public session of Dail Eireann. He introduced a Ministerial motion "pledging the support of the Irish nation in translating into deeds the principles enunciated by President Wilson at Washington," speaking effectively to the motion, which was adopted. There exists no record of his speech on the occasion. The official report of the meeting was captured by the English during the war, and the newspapers of the time, not foreseeing the future fame of Collins, only accorded to his speech a couple of lines in their report of the proceedings.

The detectives were aware of Collins's presence, and duly reported it. While he was speaking steps were taken unobtrusively to form a police cordon around all the approaches to the Mansion House. Having concluded his business Collins got away on his bicycle, with the assistance of Volunteer scouts, just before the cordon had closed in.

At this time Collins, as has been shown, was in direct touch with Ned Broy of the political section of the "G" Division, and with his assistance had conceived a daring scheme—to make a midnight visit to the Headquarters of the Dublin Detective force in Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), and inspect the secret reports and confidential documents in safe keeping there. This plan was safely carried out one night during the meetings of the Dail just referred to.

The Detective Department was stationed in a separate wing of the building from the General Police Headquarters, to which there was only access from it through the cellars. On this particular night Broy was alone on duty, the other detectives being asleep in a dormitory upstairs. To make sure that they would not disturb the proceedings Broy locked the dormitory door on the outside. Collins arrived shortly after midnight, accompanied by Sean Nunan, whom he had met accidentally, and invited to accompany him.

At the very time when Collins and Nunan had entered the outer room of the building a "scene" was created outside by a drunken soldier who smashed a window. Fortunately the other detectives did not awake, and the uniformed police dealt with the disturber without entering the wing where Collins was. The documents were locked up in a small room on the upper floor, which Broy unlocked with a skeleton key. Collins spent several of "the small hours of the morning" examining these secret reports and documents, and making notes. Among the documents was a report on, and description of himself, commencing with the words: "He comes of a brainy Cork family"—at which Collins laughed heartily. He turned up at the Dail meeting next morning with no great signs of fatigue, considering his busy, sleepless night.

A couple of days later, on April 9th, by Collins's directions, the first steps were taken by the Volunteers to warn hostile "G" men of the

danger of being too officious. The house of Detective Officer Halley was raided by Volunteers, and Detective Officer O'Brien was held up in the street, gagged, tied with ropes, and left there. This was intended merely as a demonstration, and it undoubtedly had a considerable effect upon the men concerned, and the detectives generally. Several members of the force, however, particularly Sergeant Smyth and Daniel Hoey, disregarded all warnings, and persisted in showing special zeal in their work and marked animus against Volunteers.

It was quite clear that our claim to be the elected Parliament and Government of the Irish people was reduced to an absurdity as long as a few men, officially representing the English Government, could with impunity follow us round openly, spy on all our movements, and arrest us whenever they saw fit. An issue was thus forced which in the long run inevitably led to bloodshed.

This period should not be passed over without reference to a brilliant coup by the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers, a party of whom, on March 20th, raided Collinstown Aerodrome, and captured 75 rifles and bayonets, and about five thousand rounds of ammunition. The guard of soldiers was overpowered and disarmed without the firing of a single shot.

Collins at this time (April) slept chiefly at Vaughan's Hotel, which had altogether escaped the notice of the detectives. He usually shared a bedroom with Boland and myself, and frequently shared Boland's bed with him. We

usually went to bed at a late hour—rarely before two in the morning—after sitting up debating a variety of subjects. Collins was always called at eight in the morning, if not earlier, and a simple tap at the door was sufficient to get him out of his bed. He would jump up instantly, without the preliminary stretching and yawning which most men indulge in, and would be gone about his business before Boland or I arrived in the coffee room. He transacted his office work chiefly at Cullenswood House, Ranelagh, doing most of his own typing.

I have referred to the prolonged discussions which took place nightly at Vaughan's Hotel. One of these I remember vividly—an argument between Boland, Collins and myself as to the relative efficacy of moral and physical force. Boland, the most pugnacious of men, on this occasion, championed pacifism, only passive resistance to evil and the triumph of the spirit over brute force. He maintained that the greatest man was the man who gave up his life in resisting evil without using force against it. When Collins caustically remarked that he should be the last man to preach a doctrine so contrary to his practice, Boland retorted with spirit that he knew he was unable to live up to his ideal, but that did not prevent his regarding the man who could as the truest hero. I remarked that Boland stood for the man with an idea against the man with a gun, and he enthusiastically accepted the phrase. I then remarked that there was no reason why the man with an idea should not also use a gun in defence of his idea against

the gunman, and quoted Shaw's Armorer:—"If you good people prefer preaching and shirking to buying my weapons and fighting the rascals, don't blame me. I can make cannons; I cannot make courage and conviction." And further—"Nothing is ever done in this world unless men are prepared to kill one another, if it is not done." This point of view was also argued by Collins with vigour, but Boland maintained his point that all resort to force in defence of a principle was a lowering of that principle, and that the highest ideal was the bloodless triumph of ideas over brute force. I think he quoted the words—"All that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Often in the course of the history of the next few years this discussion recurred to my mind, and particularly when the two bosom friends, Boland and Collins, met violent deaths at the same time, fighting on opposite sides.

At this time our political outlook was to a considerable extent bounded by the prospect of securing a hearing for the case of Ireland at the Peace Conference. Griffith, however, looking beyond this, saw in the establishment of Dail Eireann the opportunity for carrying out that Sinn Fein policy of national reconstruction which he had been advocating for twenty years.

A statement of our case for the Peace Conference was drafted, De Valera playing the principal part in this work. The original draft was in English, but French and Irish versions were then made. It fell to my lot to draw up the Irish version. The document was successfully

smuggled out to Paris. It may be mentioned that Diarmuid O'Hegarty had now become Secretary to the Ministry of Dail Eireann.

De Valera still adhered to his scheme of going to America, and, the Ministry having agreed to this move, it fell to the lot of Collins, as usual, to make the necessary arrangements. It was decided to send Harry Boland out first as a kind of "advance guard," to prepare for De Valera's reception. Boland was no longer "on the run," but it was doubtful if the English Government would grant him a passport to the United States, and probable that, if they knew his purpose in going, they would take steps to prevent him. It was, therefore, thought wiser to smuggle him out. Collins placed this matter in the hands of his trusty agent, Neill Kerr.

Boland's departure was kept a profound secret, but the night before his departure from Dublin Collins arranged for a farewell supper at Vaughan's, at which a few trusted Volunteer officers would give him a "send off." Most of those present, though they knew he was departing secretly to America, did not know the object of his journey. Speeches were made, and many complimentary things said of Harry. Collins, when called upon to speak, remarked rather curtly—"It will be time enough to congratulate Harry when the work is done, and done successfully." Songs were given, and Collins repeated his favourite recitation, "Kelly and Burke and Shea."

Next day Boland travelled to Liverpool, where, with Neill Kerr's assistance, he was

shipped as a fireman on the White Star steamer "Celtic," and, despite his inexperience in a fireman's work, reached New York safely without discovery, and speedily made his advent known in the public Press.

On the day of Boland's departure I was recaptured by the R.I.C., while cycling through the village of Finglas, Co. Dublin. I was subsequently court-martialled and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, being transferred from Mountjoy to Birmingham Jail, and later to Strangeways Jail, in Manchester. I mention these facts, first, because they caused the non-appearance of "An tOglach" for an interval of six months; and, secondly, because they led to a second prison escape, in the organisation of which Collins again played an important part. From the time of my recapture Collins was in constant communication with me as to ways and means of escape, and several plans were formed and later abandoned as impracticable.

As I have said, the political outlook of the Sinn Fein Movement was at the time largely bounded by the prospect of an appeal to the Peace Conference, but, as before, the continued coercion by the English Government, the daily raids and arrests, helped the national solidarity and strengthened the hands of the "forward" wing of the Volunteers. Although six months had elapsed since the termination of the European War, the Press Censorship was still retained in Ireland. At this period Lord Decies, the Irish Press Censor, resigned, and was succeeded by Major Bryan Cooper. It was announced that

the Censorship would henceforth be "voluntary," and the functions of the Censor "purely advisory," but this intimation was as untrue as most English official statements, for several instances occurred subsequent to this date where important news was "held up" by order of the Censor.

The violence of the English Government in Ireland was driving the Volunteers more and more in the direction of open warfare. An incident which occurred in Limerick, on April 6th, caused a considerable sensation. A sick Volunteer prisoner, named Robert J. Byrne, was lying in bed in Limerick Workhouse Infirmary, guarded by a force of policemen, armed with rifles, and a warder, when a party of armed Volunteers entered the ward to rescue him. A policeman fired his rifle at the prisoner, who was dangerously wounded, and the policeman was shot dead by one of the rescuers. In the mêlée that ensued four other policemen and the warder were wounded. The prisoner was taken away by his rescuers, but next day died of his wounds at Meelick, County Clare, to which he had been brought.

Limerick was at once "proclaimed" as an area under military law, and a week later barriers were erected at all the approaches to the city, and, with a strong force of soldiers posted at various points, the city was completely isolated, nobody being allowed into or out of it without a permit. The Irish Labour Party called a general strike in Limerick by way of protest. An extraordinary situation developed five days

later, when about a thousand people, who had gone to a hurling match outside the city without permits, would not be allowed into the city again. They succeeded, however, in outwitting the military and police. A large number crossed the Shannon in boats, and obtained access to the city at unguarded points; while about 300 reached the city by train from Ennis. Eventually, on May 4th, the "proclamation" was withdrawn, and the barriers and guards at the various approaches to the city were removed.

On April 20th a party of Volunteers raided the R.I.C. barracks at Araglen, Co. Cork, overpowered the policeman on guard, and carried off all the rifles and ammunition in the buildings. It was the first raid on a police barracks by Volunteers—an activity which was later to become an everyday affair. Like most of the coups of the Volunteers at this period, it was a bloodless victory. The idea of destroying the barracks when captured had not yet entered the heads of the Volunteers, whose sole idea was to gain much-needed arms and ammunition. The officer in charge of the raid was Michael Fitzgerald.

CHAPTER XV.

Ireland's Appeal to the Peace Conference April—June, 1919

ALTHOUGH the main energies of the Government, set up by Dail Eireann, were concentrated for the time on an appeal to the Peace Conference, no persons of judgment and experience had hopes of any great result therefrom. It was realised that the influence of England, as one of the prominent partners of the Allies, would be too great to allow any practical result from such an appeal; but even to secure a hearing would be a step towards the recognition of our international status. The great hope of Ireland rested on the attitude of America, where the Irish element exerted considerable influence, and the pressure which the American representatives might bring to bear on Ireland's behalf. The people of Ireland had been greatly impressed by the utterances of President Wilson during the War and the oft-repeated principle laid down by him as to the right of "small nationalities" to "self-determination." They were simple enough to believe he meant exactly what he said, and would act in accordance with the principles he had laid down.

In February, 1919, a large and representative "Irish Race Convention" was held in Philadelphia, at which a delegation was appointed to interview President Wilson as to Ireland's claim to a hearing at the Peace Conference. The delegation included the Hon. Daniel F. Cohalan, then Justice of the Supreme Court of New York State, and, when the Party waited on President Wilson, he declined to receive them while Justice Cohalan was one of their number. The other members thereupon proposed to depart without accomplishing their object, but Justice Cohalan, with his wonted political astuteness, persuaded them to allow him to withdraw, so that President Wilson would have no excuse for refusing to see them. This course was taken, and Mr. Wilson then received the delegation, and listened to the case put before him. His attitude on the occasion was described as "non-committal."

On the same day a resolution endorsing Ireland's claim to self-determination was passed by the House of Representatives by 216 votes to 41.

The Irish Race Convention selected three prominent Americans of Irish descent, Messrs. Frank P. Walsh, Edward G. Dunne, and Michael K. Ryan, to proceed to Paris and endeavour to secure a hearing for Ireland's case at the Peace Conference. All three gentlemen were men of the highest standing in American political life, so much so that on their arrival in Paris, on April 12th, Mr. Lloyd George sent them a pressing invitation to meet him, and give him an

opportunity of putting the English Government's point of view before them. No doubt the "Welsh wizard" hoped to charm them with his eloquence into a belief in the benevolent intentions of the British Government. Pending the proposed interview, however, the three delegates decided to visit Ireland and see things for themselves. a move which destroyed all hopes of hoodwinking them on the subject.

Accordingly Messrs. Walsh, Dunne and Ryan, arrived in Dublin, on May 3rd, and were accorded an enthusiastic reception. They were received by the Lord Mayor and the President of Dail Eireann, and made a triumphal journey through Ireland, being received everywhere by welcoming deputations, addresses, and cheering crowds. The only exception to this was in Belfast, where the Lord Mayor refused to see them.

One of the amusing incidents of the tour was the visit of the delegates to Mountjoy Prison, accompanied by Father Michael O'Flanagan and Dick Mulcahy. At this time, owing to my previous escape from the jail, special precautions were taken to secure me, and I was only allowed to take exercise locked in a ring surrounded by lofty iron bars, with spiked tops pointing inwards—the "iron cage," to which I have referred in describing the escape from Mountjoy. I happened to be inside this iron cage at the time when the delegates visited the prison, and in their subsequent report on conditions in Ireland great stress was laid on the "iron cage, like those in which beasts are kept in the Zoo"—no inapt description—in which I was kept.

The delegates were required not to speak to the prisoners, but this did not prevent my shouting information to them which figured in their subsequent report.

The amusing feature of the situation was that the delegates were admitted to the jail owing to a misunderstanding, and that the Dublin Castle authorities were furious when they learned of the mistake.

On May 10th a special public session of Dáil Eireann was held in the Mansion House, for the purpose of receiving the American delegates. Mr. De Valera delivered an address welcoming the delegates, in the course of which he said :—

“ We greet them, and we salute them, as a sign that America will not regard the official assurance of her responsible head as mere scraps of paper, but that the principles of right and justice are about to be supported by the massed strength of the greatest nation on the earth to-day—that nation which the whole world recognises as its only hope, that nation on which it depends whether the principles of right and justice are to prevail, or whether, as formerly, might and might only is to be right.”

Facts and figures were then quoted by Arthur Griffith and various members as to the misgovernment of Ireland by England, the decay of wealth and population, and various English acts of oppression. The principal feature of the session was a long statement by Michael Collins

as Minister of Finance, showing the enormous extent to which Ireland had been impoverished by English rule, by over-taxation, and in other ways.

The proceedings attracted large crowds of spectators, and the street outside the Mansion House was filled with cheering crowds. Before the session of the Dail commenced a Volunteer officer, named Ted Kelly, for whose arrest there was a warrant, was approaching the Mansion House, when Detective Sergeant Bruton came up to him for the purpose of arresting him. Kelly produced a revolver, and Bruton promptly put up his hands. Several Volunteers surrounded Kelly and escorted him into the Mansion House.

At the conclusion of the Session of Dail Eireann, and after the American delegates and the bulk of the members had left the building, a large body of soldiers and police, with armoured cars, and all the panoply of war, surrounded the Mansion House. The building was entered and thoroughly searched, but neither Collins nor any other of the wanted men was found.

Joe O'Reilly had procured a long ladder, with which Collins and the other wanted men had climbed over a wall and remained concealed in an adjacent building until the search was over.

The English troops remained around the building for several hours, and persons passing along the streets were held up and searched. A Civic Reception had been arranged for the American delegates in the Mansion House that night, but when they arrived they found the street occupied by soldiers, and they were searched

before being permitted to enter the Mansion House—an object lesson in English rule, which was not lost on them.

Next day the delegates, proceeding by road to Westport, were held up by a force of military about two miles outside the town and refused admission to it. Two days later the American delegates left Dublin for Paris, having seen quite enough to form a fair opinion of the state of affairs in Ireland.

Apparently Mr. Lloyd George realised this, for, on their return to Paris, he cancelled his invitation to them to see him; and, on May 28th, Mr. Lansing notified the Delegation that “the American Peace Commissioners could not, in view of the Delegation’s utterances in Ireland having given offence, make any further effort on their behalf.” The party to whom they had “given offence” was, of course, the British Government.

The remaining history of the attempt to put Ireland’s case before the Peace Conference and enlist American support may be told very briefly. On June 7th the Senate of the United States passed, by a majority of 60 votes, a resolution asking that the Irish people should have a hearing before the Peace Conference. A few days later President Wilson informed Messrs. Walsh, Dunne and Ryan that “the American Peace Commissioners could not take up Ireland’s case officially, but he and others would continue to do so unofficially.” This, of course, meant practically nothing, yet many persons in Ireland, who had believed in Mr.

Wilson's lofty sentiments during the War, were inclined to build extravagant hopes upon this vague promise.

The nearest approach to a hearing which the Irish case secured was that the Senate's resolution on Ireland was presented to the Peace Conference by the American Peace Commission.

Meanwhile Messrs. Dunne, Walsh and Ryan had issued a report on conditions in Ireland, which created something of a sensation. This report was sent by the American Secretary of State in Paris to the State Department in Washington, for transmission to Congress. The publication of this report, giving details of the drastic coercion in Ireland, the outrages on citizens, and the ill-treatment of prisoners, roused Mr. MacPherson, the English Chief Secretary for Ireland, to that state of fury which seemed his usual condition when the word "Ireland" was mentioned. He issued a fierce declaration that the report was "an outrageous and wanton travesty of facts," and an announcement that "a memorandum giving the true facts" was being prepared. Meanwhile the publication of the report in Ireland was prohibited by the Press Censorship, which was supposed to be "purely voluntary."

At length Mr. MacPherson produced his "refutation" of the American Delegates' report, a document concocted in the usual vein, which was easily shown to be teeming with untruths and inaccuracies. One of the most humorous touches about this precious statement was his citing of the findings of his bogus Commission

into the treatment of the Belfast prisoners (at an inquiry at which, as I have mentioned, the only evidence heard was that of the prison officials implicated), as a refutation of the charge of ill-treating prisoners. A characteristic touch of MacPhersonism was his answer to the statement of the American Delegates that some of the prisoners were among the most highly respected men in Ireland. He gave a list of the occupations showing that some were bootmakers, tailors, shopkeepers, and the like.

Mr. Frank Walsh replied by challenging Mr. MacPherson to submit his evidence to a committee appointed by the Peace Conference, but Mr. MacPherson did not think it judicious to notice the challenge.

In short, the efforts to secure Ireland a hearing at the Peace Conference, though they had a considerable propagandist value, had no practical result. The Irish people were not greatly disappointed or disillusioned. The principle of "Sinn Fein," of self-reliance as the basis of national progress, was beginning to be generally understood; and men turned with interest to watch the progress of Dail Eireann in carrying out its programme of national reconstruction. That the country was drifting rapidly to a state of war was hardly realised by the majority of the Irish people.

CHAPTER XVI.

Organising Intelligence

June—August, 1919

BEFORE I proceed to trace the course of events which led to the warfare of 1920-21, it is necessary to explain to readers outside Ireland exactly what the "Royal Irish Constabulary" were and what they stood for.

A great deal of misunderstanding was caused abroad by the English device of referring to these men as "policemen." When a foreigner read of "policemen" being shot in Ireland, he naturally pictured to himself those civic custodians of law and order who function in normal countries. It should be made clear that the "R.I.C." never were policemen, in the sense in which the word is understood in free countries.

The "R.I.C." were a military force, armed with rifles and living in barracks. Their primary and essential purpose was to hold the country in subjection to England. In furtherance of this aim, the force was kept at a strength out of all proportion to the requirements of a normal police force. In districts where crime was practically unknown, where the only case that came before

a magistrate in the course of a year would be an odd case of a drunken travelling tinker, barracks full of strapping young men, armed with rifles, were maintained at the expense of the people of Ireland. Every village had its barracks, with its garrison holding the post for England, and dominating the countryside.

The R.I.C. were recruited from the ranks of the people for the purpose of spying on the people. To ensure that no personal sympathies or friendly ties would influence them, it was a regulation of the force that no constable could be stationed in the county of which he was a native. The R.I.C. had established an elaborate system of espionage which was carried to a wonderful pitch of perfection. In every town or village all the movements of persons were watched and reported upon. All popular organisations were kept under observation, and all persons who expressed patriotic opinions were the object of surveillance. Even their activities in such matters as teaching Irish, or acting in Irish plays, were duly reported; and Dublin Castle, as the result of these reports, had the most exact information as to the personnel, strength and methods of all national movements in the country. So perfectly was this done that the people concerned had not the slightest idea of the extent to which they were being spied upon. When I read the evidence given before the Royal Commission, on the Insurrection of 1916, I was amazed at the exact information possessed by the R.I.C. as to the strength of the Volunteers in the various districts, and the number of rifles

possessed by them. Mr. Birrell told the Commission: "so far as the country generally is concerned, we have the reports of the Royal Irish Constabulary, who send us in, almost daily, reports from almost every district in Ireland, and I have them under the microscope. Their reports . . . undoubtedly do enable anybody sitting either in Dublin or London, to form a correct general estimate of the feeling of the country side in different localities." With all this information, however, Dublin Castle had no anticipation of the Insurrection.

The Royal Irish Constabulary were not only the right arm of the English administration in Ireland, they were also its eyes and ears, and without them it could not function effectively. As long as they were allowed to continue on their old lines, we were not likely to get much further. It was obvious that the first steps towards breaking down the English administration in Ireland must be taken against this force. If they collapsed the whole machinery of English administration in Ireland would come down with them.

The first step taken against them was the decree of social ostracism passed by Dail Eireann. In introducing it Mr. De Valera used some words that deserve quoting. He said:—

"It is scarcely necessary to explain what is meant by this motion. The people of Ireland ought not to fraternise, as they often do, with the forces which are the main instruments in keeping them in subjection. It is not consistent

with personal or national dignity. It is certainly not consistent with safety. They are spies in our midst. They are England's janissaries. The knowledge of our sentiments and feelings and purposes, which they derive either from their own hearts, because they are of our race, or from intercourse amongst us, they put liberally at the disposal of the foreign usurper, in order to undo us in our struggle against him. They are the eyes and ears of the enemy.

“ They are no ordinary civil force, as police are in other countries. The R.I.C., unlike any other police force in the world, is a military body, armed with rifle and bayonet and revolver, as well as baton. They are given full licence by their superiors to work their will upon an unarmed populace. The more brutal the commands given them by their superiors, the more they seem to revel in carrying them out, against their own flesh and blood be it remembered !

“ Their history is a continuity of brutal treason against their own people. From their very foundation they have been the mainstay of the privileged ascendancy, and the great obstacle to every movement for social as well as national liberty. I need not remind you of their record during the tithe and land wars, or of their recent outrages at Ballybunion, for which not a man of them was punished. Punishment by their British masters—not likely ! They are patted on the back, praised

and encouraged. The British Minister, MacPherson, to whom they are most directly responsible, speaks of their wonderful fidelity—there have been no Curragh Mutinies in the R.I.C.—and promises that he and his Government will back them up, with all their resources, in everything they do and in every action they take. Very well, they have undoubtedly merited the praise of their paymasters, but the Irish people have a duty to themselves.

“If Mr. MacPherson may incite the police, the Irish people, as an organised society, have a right to defend themselves. The social ostracism which I propose, and which I ask you to sanction, is a first step in exercising that right. These men must not be tolerated socially, as if they were clean, healthy members of our organised life. They must be shown and made feel how base are the functions they perform, and how vile is the position they occupy. To shun them, to refuse to talk or have any social intercourse with them, or to treat them as equals, will give them vividly to understand how utterly the people of Ireland loathe both themselves and their calling, and may prevent young Irishmen from dishonouring both themselves and their country by entering that calling.”

In this passage De Valera failed to emphasise sufficiently the organised system of espionage, of which the R.I.C. were the agents. He hardly realised, and the majority of the Irish people

hardly realised, how extensive and effective this system was. It was left to Michael Collins to unravel and neutralise this system. However, the decree of social ostracism was the first step in the right direction. It was taken up by the Irish people generally, and had a very marked effect on the force concerned.

The incidents at Soloheadbeg and Limerick Workhouse Infirmary, when members of the R.I.C. were killed, were followed by another combat at Knocklong, on May 14th. A Volunteer prisoner, named J. J. Hogan, was being conveyed by train by an escort of R.I.C., when a party of Volunteers entered the train at Knocklong Station, Co. Limerick, and forcibly rescued the prisoner. In the fight that ensued a constable was killed outright, and a sergeant fatally wounded.

The problem of smuggling De Valera across to America was now exercising Michael Collins. Neill Kerr was at the time lying sick in a nursing home in Dublin, and Collins, whose manifold activities never caused him to neglect his friends, used to visit him daily. One day, about the end of May, he told Kerr of De Valera's project to go to America, and asked him how it could be managed. Kerr replied that the two best men for the task were Dick O'Neill and Barney Downes, and they must be got to go on the one ship. This was arranged in New York. Both men were on different ships, but got together on the "Celtic" for the purpose of smuggling De Valera out. On arrival in Liverpool, O'Neill crossed to Dublin, and discussed the matter with Collins and Kerr. Finally, it was agreed

that O'Neill should take De Valera across to Liverpool. Kerr rose from a sick bed for the purpose of assisting, and crossed with Sean O Murthuile to Liverpool, where he and Lanigan took charge of the arrangements.

It had been settled that O'Neill and De Valera were to be met at Lime Street Station, but by some misunderstanding they arrived by way of Birkenhead, and went direct to Lanigan's house. Not knowing this Sean O Murthuile and Lanigan spent the whole night driving round Liverpool looking for the missing men. Incidentally they got into conversation with their driver, and discovered him to be a well-known boxer.

De Valera was brought down to the ship disguised as a sailor, and went on board as one of the crew, but when they had set sail he was stowed away by Downes and O'Neill, who looked after his comfort during the voyage. He arrived in New York about the middle of June.

The story of De Valera's activities in the United States must be left to a later chapter. For many months his work proved a triumphant success from the point of view of propaganda and raising money for the Irish National Loan. From the time of his arrival he kept in constant communication with Collins by the usual secret means, and took great pains to keep him informed of the progress of events. Collins, for his part, not only kept De Valera posted as to affairs in Ireland, but paid visits to his wife and family in Greystones at regular intervals (a difficult and dangerous proceeding), and added to his letters bulletins recording their welfare.

On June 21st, a few days after his arrival, De Valera wrote :—

“ A Mhichíl a Chara,

“ I have told A.G. (Arthur Griffith) for the Cabinet, the little I have to tell about my movements here so far. Dick managed everything excellently on the way here ; and deserves all the recognition that can be given.”

After discussing some further details he asked : “ Is the Volunteer question settled ? ” The matter referred to was the problem of the control of the Volunteers, who were, by their constitution, an independent, autonomous body. As they now accepted the authority of the Minister of Defence appointed by Dail Eireann, Cathal Brugha wished that all officers and men should be required to take the same oath as was taken by members of the Dail. It was in connection with this question that friction first arose between Brugha and Collins. Replying, on the 25th August, Collins wrote :—

“ The Volunteer affair is now fixed satisfactorily. The enclosed oath has been passed by the Dail. You'll notice that it is a variation of the American one. The Convention will be held some time before the middle of November. Arrangements generally on the Brigade lines agreed on before your departure are now about to proceed.”

In fact a Convention was necessary, according

to the strict letter of the law, to regularise the handing over of control to the Minister of Defence. This, however, was a mere matter of form, as none of the officers and men had any objection to such a handing over. The holding of the proposed Convention in November, as will be shown, proved impracticable.

Writing, on July 12th, to De Valera, Collins remarked: "I was very pleased to get from your side a cutting out of the 'Evening Sun.' It contained a big announcement saying, 'De Valera to pay Bonds of 1866.' That, of course, is quite right. It was worth going to America to be converted to that idea. I am serious. It is the right thing to do."

This was a reference to "bonds of the Irish Republic," issued by the Fenian (or I.R.B.) organisation in America in connection with the revolutionary movement of 1865-7. Collins held that Dail Eireann should accept responsibility for these bonds.

To this De Valera, early in August, replied: "What did you mean by saying it was worth going to America to be 'converted' to the idea of paying up the Fenian bonds? Surely I never opposed acknowledging that as a National debt. You must mean something else. What is it?"

Collins replied, on the 29th August: "I meant about the Fenian Bonds, that it was worth going to America to be converted to my idea. Honestly I did not think the fact that I was practically forced to delete a certain paragraph from the prospectus looked much in favour of the idea. For God's sake, Dev., don't start an argument

about its being from the prospectus only, etc. Don't, please. It's quite all right."

Writing on the same subject, in October, he remarked—"By the way, you will probably have seen some of the Fenian Certificates since you arrived in America. If you have, you will notice that we are responsible for an accumulated interest, at the rate of six per cent. per annum, from varying dates during the period 1864—1867. This was in my mind when we were going over the original draft prospectus. You remember I talked a good deal of 'continuity of responsibility.' I am sorry to be always fighting with you on these matters."

The departure of De Valera brought Michael Collins more into touch with Arthur Griffith, who was now acting President. Collins, as Minister of Finance, had naturally much to do with Griffith, and their association resulted in the growth of mutual esteem and confidence. Although he was usually classified as a "moderate man," and even a "pacifist," it was under the Presidency of Griffith that the Volunteers first resorted to drastic action against the English forces; and in this action they were given a free hand by Griffith, as President of Dail Eireann.

It was also about this time, while Collins and Griffith were being drawn together, that Cathal Brugha began to be estranged from Collins. Since Brugha had left the I.R.B. he cherished a strong suspicion of that body, and was aware of the fact that Collins was one of its leaders. Furthermore, he seemed to view the growing

prestige and popularity of Collins with resentment. Collins, on the other hand, still regarded Brugha with the utmost regard and respect.

It must be emphatically stated that Cathal Brugha was the great advocate of extreme and drastic action against the English Government. He even advocated certain measures which no other members of the Executive or G.H.Q. favoured, and, in pursuance of his idea, had Intelligence Officers sent to London to report on the practicability of these measures.

Michael Collins had now become official Director of Intelligence, or, as he was usually called at this time, "Director of Information."

All official communications from members of G.H.Q. were usually signed with initials denoting their position—as "C.S.," (Chief of Staff), "A.G." (Adjutant-General), "D.O." (Director of Organisation). At a later period cipher signatures were adopted, as it was not desirable that the English, if they captured documents, should be able to ascertain the identity of the writers. But Collins, throughout the hottest period of the ensuing struggle, usually signed his letters "M.," or "M.C.," when he did not sign his name in full."

While accepting the additional post of Director of Intelligence, Collins continued to act as Adjutant-General and Director of Organisation for many months. He thus filled at the same time *four positions*, each of which separately would require all the time and energies of an ordinary man, and filled them all with his usual efficiency. He had, indeed, been Director of Intelligence

in fact, though not in name, for several months past. He now set to work to create a regular department, and find a suitable staff.

He had already become intimate with Liam Tobin, who was at that time Intelligence Officer to the Dublin Brigade, and he selected him as his Chief Intelligence Officer. Tom Cullen was afterwards drafted into Intelligence, while still carrying on his work as Assistant Q.M.G., and, in his office at Bachelor's Walk, combined the business of the two departments. Collins had now three offices, Cullenswood House, Bachelor's Walk, and a Finance Department office at 6 Harcourt Street.

The Intelligence Staff was built up slowly, as suitable men were not easily found. Among the earlier members were Joe Dolan, Frank Saurin, Joe Guilfoyle, Charlie Dalton, Paddy Caldwell, and Frank Thornton; The last named became next in command to Tobin and Cullen. Later additions, about the end of 1920, were Peter Magee, Ned Kelleher, Dan MacDonnell, Charlie Byrne, and Paddy Kennedy. At a later date Caldwell was transferred to the Adjutant-General's Department, and took charge of the distribution of "An tOglach."

It was in the month of July, 1919, that "The Squad" was formed, a body that played a big part in the subsequent fighting in Dublin. The "Squad" consisted of a small band of Volunteers attached to the Intelligence Department, specially selected for dangerous and difficult jobs. They were required to give their whole time to the service of the Volunteers, and to be always

available, but they were not mercenaries. They were paid only the salaries which they had been earning in their ordinary occupation from which they had been withdrawn.

The first commanding officer of "The Squad" was Mick McDonnell. The second in command was Paddy Daly, whom I have mentioned in connection with the escape from Mountjoy Prison. He afterwards succeeded McDonnell as "O.C." Early members of the "Squad" were Tom Keogh (half brother of MacDonnell), Jim Slattery, Vincent Byrne, Joe Leonard, Eddie Byrne, Ben Barrett, Paddy Griffin and Sean Doyle. Tom Keogh was also employed in the Volunteer "Munition Factory," but later left it to give all his time to the "Squad." There were other men employed in the Munition Factory—Mick Keogh, Sean Keogh, Sean O'Sullivan, and Gabriel MacGrath, who were also sometimes called out to assist the "Squad." Other members of the "Squad" were Frank Bolster, Ben Byrne, James Conroy, J. Brennan, Pat MacCrae, Paddy Drury, James Connolly, and Bill Stapleton. To the courage, loyalty and secrecy of the members of this small body was due the success of many of the operations in Dublin, which wrought such damage to the English machinery of coercion and oppression.

As I have referred to the Volunteer "Munitions Factory," it would be well to give some account of that remarkable institution.

In December, 1918, the Dublin Brigade started the manufacture of hand grenades in the cellar of a cycle shop in Parnell Street, which traded

under the name of "Heron and Lawless." Joe Lawless, it may be mentioned, was an active Volunteer, son of James Lawless, Secretary of the Dublin County Council. Michael Lynch, who was at this time Vice-Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, was made responsible for this undertaking. Some months later the whole shop and "factory" were taken over by G.H.Q., largely through the instrumentality of Michael Collins.

Prior to this the place had been raided by detectives, but the munition workers in the cellar, warned by an electric light signal, were engaged in the innocent task of moulding Tara brooches when they arrived. There was a package of Verey lights in the place, which had been captured in the raid on Collinstown Aerodrome, and in consequence of this the detectives arrested the proprietor, Lawless, but he was released in a few days.

Under the control of G.H.Q. the munition factory carried on for nearly eighteen months without being discovered by the enemy, and eventually was found only by an accident, to be succeeded by a more elaborately equipped factory elsewhere in the city.

The workers in this factory at the time in question were Mat Furlong, Tom Young, Gabriel MacGrath, Sean O'Sullivan, and Sean Kernan, and later Tom Keogh, Mick Keogh, and Sean Keogh. Three classes of hand grenades were made, known as No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3, the last-named, on account of its size, being popularly called "the number nine bomb."

These grenades were worked with a pin, but percussion grenades were also made, and at a later date trench mortars, and shells were manufactured. It was at a trial of these last in October, 1920, in the neighbourhood of Dunboyne, Co. Meath, that Mat Furlong met his death, through a defective shell bursting the mortar.

. By this time Collins had established a system of meeting his friendly detectives, and particularly Broy and MacNamara, regularly every week at Tomás Gay's house at Clontarf. By this means he gained a close insight into all the secrets of the enemy intelligence system, the methods, outlook and intentions of his opponents. The keys to police and official cipher codes were ascertained, and gradually a system was established by which English official messages were tapped at various postal centres and decoded. Many important confidential reports and other secret documents of the enemy, found their way into his hands.

On July 30th, Detective Sergeant Smith, of the "G" Division, was shot in the street near his house, and he died subsequently of his wounds. Smith was a man who showed special animus against the national cause; he had received several warnings which he had treated with contempt. The shooting of Smith was not the work of any irresponsible "gunmen." It was an execution carried out by authority of the responsible Minister of Dail Eireann, the Minister of Defence. Dail Eireann had now been established six months, with the authority of the

Irish people behind it, but this was the first drastic action taken against those Irishmen who were acting as spies and agents of the English in their warfare on Dail Eireann.

It was an official act, and there is no truth in the suggestion that then, or at any other time, the Minister responsible, or any member of G.H.Q., sought to shirk responsibility to the Dail or the country for this or similar acts which followed, or that any member of the Ministry or the Dail challenged or repudiated these acts.

Of course the machinery through which these spies were dealt with was provided by the Intelligence Department. Our position with regard to the matter was thus explained by Michael Collins, in one of a series of articles in the "New York American," in 1922:—

"England could always reinforce her army. She could replace every soldier that she lost. But there were others indispensable for her purposes which were not so easily replaced. To paralyse the British machine it was necessary to strike at individuals. Without her spies England was helpless. It was only by means of their accumulated and accumulating knowledge that the British machine could operate. Without their police throughout the country, how could they find the man they 'wanted'? Without their criminal agents in the capital how could they carry out that 'removal' of the leaders that they considered essential for their victory? Spies are not so ready to step into the shoes of their departed

confederates as are soldiers to fill up the front line in honourable battle. And, even when the new spy stepped into the shoes of the old one, he could not step into the old man's knowledge.

"The most potent of these spies were Irishmen enlisted in the British service, and drawn from the small farmer and labourer class. Well might every Irishman at present ask himself if we were doing a wrong thing in getting rid of the system which was responsible for bringing these men into the ranks of the opponents of their own race.

"We struck at individuals, and by so doing we cut their lines of communication, and we shook their morale. And we conducted the conflict, difficult as it was, with the unequal terms imposed by the enemy, as far as possible, according to the rules of war. Only the armed forces and the spies and criminal agents of the British Government were attacked. Prisoners of war were treated honourably and considerately, and were released after they had been disarmed."

On September 12th Sergeant Daniel Hoey was shot dead outside the door of the Police Headquarters, in Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street). Hoey had been conspicuous for his zeal in the work of spying on his fellow countrymen, and after Easter Week, 1916, had exerted himself to his utmost to secure victims for execution. Hoey had also been warned, and disregarded the warnings.

The effect of these events was a great abatement

of the zeal of the other political detectives, and a marked disinclination for going beyond the letter of their duty, or taking any risks in its execution. Under the circumstances, Collins thought it safe to go back to live in his old lodgings at 44 Mountjoy Street. More remarkable still, he wrote letters to me, then in Manchester Jail, dated from "44 Mountjoy Street," and signed with his own name, which letters were duly delivered to me after being read by the prison censor ; and letters addressed to him from me, and from many others, were duly delivered by a postman at 44 Mountjoy Street, without causing it to be raided. Collins's own information was now so exact, and he understood the enemy system of intelligence so well, that he knew he could do this with perfect safety.

About the end of 1918 Collins got into touch with Joe Vize, then in Glasgow, a man who did invaluable work in connection with the importing of arms and ammunition to Ireland. Vize had formerly been an officer in the British Navy.

From the date of the establishment of Dail Eireann, in January, there had been incessant raids, arrests, prohibitions of meetings and concerts, placing of areas under martial law, suppressions of newspapers, and other measures of coercion by the English forces in Ireland. All the peaceful activities of Dail Eireann were interfered with. The Dail was declared "suppressed," the attempt to raise a National Loan was declared illegal, and citizens were subjected to daily outrages in their houses and

Lam

Have we any B
men? I wonder if we
can trace B who is
said to have gone into the
Joy as a wanderer.

41.

TYPICAL MESSAGE OF COLLINS TO HIS CHIEF INTELLIGENCE OFFICER TOBIN, 1921.

in the streets. Even the meetings of a non-political Commission of Inquiry into Irish Industries were prohibited. The reader must bear these facts in mind in order to visualise the atmosphere in which a constructive national movement was transferred into a guerilla warfare, and energies that should have been devoted to the industrial, social and cultural advancement of the country were diverted into the destructive work of the bomb and bullet.

On August 13th a boy of 15, named Francis Murphy, who was a member of the national "Boy Scouts" force, known as Fianna Eireann, was shot dead in his father's house at Glan, near Ennistymon, Co. Clare. At the inquest which followed the jury returned the following verdict :—

"That Francis Murphy, of Glan, Ennistymon, was unlawfully and wilfully murdered at Glan, on the morning of August 14th, by a bullet unlawfully and wilfully fired by members of the military unknown to us, into the house of his father, John Murphy, which bullet caused immediate death."

I have already referred to the successful raid on Araglen R.I.C. Barracks in April ; but it was really in Co. Clare that the guerilla warfare may be said to have started. In July and August there were attacks on police posts and barracks at Inch, Connolly, Moyfadden (Kildysart), Scariff, Bodyke, and Moyne. An R.I.C. patrol was ambushed at Illaunbawn, a constable being

killed, and a sergeant mortally wounded. Barracks at Newmarket-on-Fergus were successfully raided by Volunteers, and six rifles, five revolvers, and a quantity of ammunition taken away.

There was also an ambush of a police patrol at Lorrha, Co. Tipperary, in which one R.I.C. man was killed and another wounded.

In Fermoy, Co. Cork, the first combat between military and Volunteers occurred on September 7th. A party of seventeen soldiers, carrying rifles, when marching to the Wesleyan Chapel to attend service there, were attacked by a smaller number of Volunteers, armed with revolvers, under Liam Lynch. They were all disarmed, and their rifles were taken away in motor cars by the Volunteers. In the struggle one soldier was shot dead, and three others were wounded. That night the military ran amok through the town of Fermoy, wrecking shops, smashing windows, and assaulting civilians, while the R.I.C. looked on without interfering.

In the month of August several R.I.C. barracks, in remote districts in the South and West, were closed down, the men being transferred to other barracks. Already the "social ostracism" of the R.I.C. had had some effect. There had been a number of resignations from the force, and it was difficult to get new recruits. The closing down of barracks in the more remote districts went on increasing steadily from this time onwards. It was a sign of a gradual relaxing of the hold of the British administration on the country, or, as it has sometimes been called, the beginning of the British evacuation.

CHAPTER XVII.

The National Loan

FROM its inception Dail Eireann had been growing steadily in prestige. The people were learning to look to it as the real authority, and the schemes of national reconstruction put forward by it attracted the support of the most thoughtful as well as the most enthusiastic. A favourable opportunity seemed offered of giving a fair trial to that Sinn Fein policy which Arthur Griffith had been preaching for so many years to deaf ears.

One item of that policy now began to play a large part in the life of the people. Abandoning the English Courts, they settled their disputes by submitting them to arbitration courts, which came to be known as "Sinn Fein Courts," and later as "Republican Courts." It was the general feeling that more fair play, and more reasonable decisions, could be obtained at these popular tribunals than at courts held under British law, while the cost of litigation was immensely reduced. The English Government were embarrassed by the fact that under English laws an arbitration court was perfectly legal, and its decisions as binding on the parties concerned as those of the law courts. At a later

date war was declared by the English on those Courts, but for the present they were not interfered with, and the newspapers began to publish regularly reports of cases tried at "Sinn Fein Courts." After a time the Home Affairs Department of Dail Eireann proceeded to put these Courts on a regular basis, by an Act of the Dail, providing for the setting up of Courts in each parish, and higher courts in larger areas, to be known as "District Courts."

I have already quoted De Valera's announcement, at the second public session of Dail Eireann, that the Minister for Finance was preparing a prospectus for a loan, of which £250,000 would be offered to the public at home, and £250,000 abroad, "in bonds of such amounts as to meet the needs of the small subscriber." At the very time when Collins was adding to his many other activities the work of building up an Intelligence Department, he was also engaged in carrying out the arduous programme outlined by De Valera—a task that English interference rendered even more difficult than was anticipated.

The first public announcement of the National Loan was made at the meeting of the Ard-Chomhairle of Sinn Fein, held in the Dublin Mansion House, on August 21st. Mr. Griffith presided, and delegates were present from 47 constituencies. Michael Collins attended, having as usual to take precautions to avoid arrest, and submitted a statement on the Loan.

He explained that the Dail had sanctioned a loan of £250,000, to be raised in Ireland, and a corresponding sum of 1,250,000 dollars in America,

but added that Mr. De Valera had since asked permission to increase the latter amount to 5,000,000 dollars.

The Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, Arthur Griffith, and James O'Mara were named as Trustees of the Loan Issue, and it was decided that bonds would be issued for £1 and all multiples thereof.

When Collins took over his duties as Minister of Finance, he took an office in 6 Harcourt Street, and here at this period he had one of his many narrow escapes from arrest.

Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers, and Cumann na mBan had already been declared "suppressed" by English proclamation. On September 12th appeared a proclamation in the "Dublin Gazette" declaring Dail Eireann "suppressed." On the same day military and police raided No. 6 Harcourt Street, and raids and searches were carried out throughout the country.

When the soldiers and police arrived at Harcourt Street, Collins was working in his office on an upper storey. He opened a back window, thinking that he could get down the back by a water pipe, but there was none within reach. He then returned to the room, determined to trust in bluff, and gave his revolver to his typist to hide.

An Inspector of the "G" Division, accompanied by a policeman, came up to the landing and entered the room, leaving the policeman at the door. He did not know Collins, and had no suspicion of his identity. Seeing some documents in Collins's hand, which he had snatched up to

put in safety, he demanded to see them. Collins retorted: "What's it got to do with you? A nice job you have, spying on your fellow countrymen." The words seemed to have some effect on the Inspector, who allowed Collins to brush past him out of the door, with the papers in his hand. He proceeded up to the caretaker's apartments at the top of the house, and, arrived there, got out through the skylight on to the roof. From there he reached the roof of the Ivanhoe Hotel, where he remained until the raid, which occupied an hour, was over, and the military and police had departed, bringing with them two prisoners, Pádraig O'Keeffe, Assistant Secretary of Sinn Fein, and Ernest Blythe, T.D. It was on the night after this raid that Detective Hoey, who had been a member of the raiding party, was shot dead outside the Police Headquarters, in Brunswick Street, as described in our last chapter.

The incident illustrates the difficulties under which Collins had to carry on the work of the National Loan. Another man in his place would have ceased to frequent an office stationed in so dangerous a locality, but Collins continued to turn in to his work daily, as if nothing had happened.

He had realised, however, that it was absolutely necessary to get more accommodation for the work of the National Loan, and he obtained the sanction of the Dail Cabinet to purchase a house for the work of the Dail.

The place selected was 76 Harcourt Street, which Collins got Batt O'Connor to purchase

in his own name. The following account of matters in connection with the transaction was given me by Batt O'Connor :—

“ When I bought the house, I pointed out to him that when the police raided No. 6 Harcourt Street, they got all the books and papers, and I suggested providing a hiding place for his documents. He answered—‘ It would be worth trying anyway.’

“ So I got to work and built a secret closet in the thickness of the walls. The place was raided, and they searched the house. The staff had barely time to get the books and papers under the sliding door when the police burst into the room. They searched the building from the cellar to the attic, but only found loose pamphlets and stuff that did not matter.

“ I also provided means of escape for Collins. We had an alarm bell on the top landing, so that, when the caretaker saw the enemy coming, he could ring the alarm bell outside the room where Collins worked. I had also provided a light ladder on the top landing, hanging on two hooks, so that he could immediately get this through a skylight. On the outside of the skylight we had bolts, so that it could be bolted from the outside after the ladder had been pulled up after him.

“ The next trouble was to find out whether it would be safe to get from there into the Standard Hotel, which was two doors away. I heard that the proprietor of the Standard was friendly to the cause, and reported this matter to him. He made the characteristic reply—‘ It is not the

friendship of the proprietor I want, but the friendship of the boots. We must get the boots.' So I approached the boots, and we took him into our confidence. He promised to leave the skylight on their roof always unbolted."

A time was not far off when all these precautions were to be put to the test. The annual Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis (or Convention) had been announced as to be held in the Mansion House, on September 16th. As Sinn Fein was now supposed to be a "suppressed" organisation, it was anticipated that the English Government would take steps to prevent the assembly. On the appointed day a large force of police surrounded the Mansion House, but no attempt to hold the meeting was made. It was ascertained later that the Convention had been held in the Mansion House on the previous night, lasting till 3 o'clock in the morning, and that the full agenda was gone through.

A large staff was now working in 76 Harcourt Street, on the business of the Loan. A few days after the raid on 6 Harcourt Street, most of the Irish weeklies published as an advertisement a prospectus of the National Loan. It stated—

"The proceeds of the Loan will be used for propagating the Irish case all over the world; for establishing in foreign countries Consular Services to promote Irish Trade and Commerce; for developing and encouraging Irish Sea Fisheries; for developing and encouraging the re-afforestation of the country; for developing

and encouraging Irish industrial effort; for establishing a National Civil Service; for establishing National Arbitration Courts; for the establishment of a Land Mortgage Bank, with a view to the re-occupancy of untenanted lands, and generally for national purposes."

Most of the work outlined in this programme was duly carried out. A considerable sum was devoted to foreign propaganda. Consuls were appointed to look after Irish trade interests in various cities abroad. Co-operative societies were started among fishermen, and supported by grants from the Dail. The employes of the various departments of the Dail constituted the nucleus of the promised National Civil Service. The success of the Arbitration Courts has been referred to; and the National Land Bank, which was soon after established, and was opened in March, 1920, proved highly successful.*

The Land Bank, though started and at first financed by the Dail, traded as an ordinary independent business enterprise, and neither the English Government nor the general public suspected its connection with the Government of the Saorstát. Collins, of course, was the principal promoter of the scheme.

In the advertisement of the National Loan there was no mention of Dail Eireann, only of "the elected representatives of the Irish people." and the Minister of Finance was referred to as the "Director of Finance." This was done so as

* In 1926 the National Land Bank was purchased by the Bank of Ireland.

not to afford the English Government a pretext for acting against the papers that published the advertisement. This provision proved unavailing. Every paper which published the advertisement was at once suppressed by a military order. All copies of the papers containing the advertisement were seized, and in some offices the printing machinery was dismantled.

Among the suppressed papers was the "Cork Examiner," the principal daily newspaper in the South of Ireland. This journal, and some provincial weeklies, were allowed to re-appear after a short interval, but a number of weekly reviews in Dublin of a national tinge were permanently suppressed. These included "Nationality" (Griffith's own paper), "The Republic," "An Saoghal Gaedhalach," "New Ireland," "Fáinne an Lae" (the official organ of the Irish Language organisation), and the "Voice of Labour" (organ of the Labour Party). By some oversight another small Sinn Féin organ, called "Young Ireland," published from the same office as "Nationality," escaped the attention of the suppressors, and "Young Ireland" now became Griffith's organ.

The wholesale suppressions proved the best possible advertisement for the National Loan. The English authorities declared it illegal to solicit subscriptions or pay subscriptions to the Loan, but this did not prove a deterrent to would-be subscribers. There had been some doubt, when the Loan was started, whether it would be possible to raise so large a sum as a quarter of a million by subscriptions in Ireland. Under Collins's

vigorous control, in face of the English campaign against it, the amount realised when the Loan subscriptions were finally closed in July, 1920, was £379,000.

In order to give a coherent account of the history and progress of the National Loan in Ireland, it is better to cover the events of the succeeding nine months in regard to it here, instead of wedging it in among the warlike occurrences, shootings, and escapes narrated in the following chapters. It is necessary to realise that, while Collins was immersed in the thrilling military activities which will be related, he was also carrying on the less romantic, but equally strenuous, difficult, and dangerous work of the National Loan, dividing his main energies between his Intelligence Department and his Finance Department. He spent some hours in both offices daily, getting through an enormous amount of work in the quickest possible way. The files of his correspondence, from both departments, constitute a striking record of the amazing energy of the man, and the thoroughness with which he threw himself into every detail of the work.

He began his work for the Loan by appointing four organisers—Eamonn Fleming (brother of Patrick Fleming, mentioned in connection with the Mountjoy Prison escape), for Leinster; Eamonn Donnelly, for Ulster; P. Ryan, for Connaught; and P. C. O'Mahony, for Munster. Each of these men was empowered, subject to his sanction, to appoint sub-organisers for any districts where it was thought necessary. Each member of Dail Eireann who was at liberty

was asked to make himself responsible for raising a certain quota in the constituency which he represented. Special arrangements were made for those constituencies whose representatives were in prison. In his instructions to organisers, on October 7th, he wrote :—

“ The mode of procedure in starting work, and developing the necessary organisation, has been in the first instance to call a Conference of the prominent supporters of the constituency. As already explained, this Conference should not be confined to those who are active members of the Sinn Fein Clubs, but an endeavour should be made to secure the services of supporters who may not, up to the present, have taken an active part. It is of the utmost importance that this particular point should not be overlooked. In places where most satisfactory results have been obtained, a good deal of money has been forthcoming from people who have not hitherto subscribed to Sinn Fein at all.”

Owing to the danger of raids and arrests, it was very difficult to get meetings held in the various areas, and a doubtful matter to approach business men who were thought likely to be sympathetic. It was necessary to summon the meetings in the various districts secretly, and hold them in out of the way places, and it was difficult to get those not directly concerned with politics to take the risk of attending. Great assistance, however, was obtained from members of the Volunteers, who went round and interviewed people in their districts.

A typical example of the difficulties under which the work was done was given in Mullingar, where a meeting in connection with the Loan was arranged to be held at the Town Hall, in November, prominent business men and farmers being circularised to attend. The police heard of this, and, at the time when the proposed meeting was due, surrounded the Town Hall. It was arranged that a crowd of people should go to the Court House and endeavour to enter, in order to keep the attention of the police, and meanwhile a very successful meeting was held in the churchyard, resulting in a sum of £300 for the Loan.

Another difficulty arose in the case of business men and farmers who paid their subscriptions by cheque, as some of the banks at the time declined to cash cheques made out to "The Minister of Finance." In many cases the money had in the first place to be lodged in the district bank in the name of some local man.

The printing of the bonds and other literature in connection with the Loan had, of course, to be done secretly, and it is interesting to note that a great part of it was done within a few hundred yards of Dublin Castle, at Dollard's Printinghouse. A good deal of the printing was also done by Mr. Patrick Mahon, of Yarnhall Street.

The success of a Loan, collected under circumstances of such difficulty, was simply amazing, and one of the best of all possible proofs of national solidarity. It is difficult to get subscriptions for national objects at the best

of times, but, when each subscriber risked arrest and imprisonment, one would have expected it to be ten times more difficult. Few, if any, of the subscribers expected to see their money again. It is doubtful if any even asked to see the terms of the prospectus ; and it must have come as a pleasant surprise to many of them to find the Free State Government, in fulfilment of the pledge given by Michael Collins during the debate on the Treaty, honouring those bonds, for which twenty-eight shillings in the pound will be paid in 1927.

The first subscription to the Loan was paid on August 26th. Besides the money subscribed in Ireland, subscriptions were received from Irishmen and Irish sympathisers in every country in Europe, and from places as far away as China, Bombay, and Australia. A draft from South African exiles contained £1,000. Among the subscribers were British officers of the Army of Occupation on the Rhine.

The Loan organisers were required to submit to Collins a weekly report as to the progress of the Loan in all the districts under their charge, and they had frequently cause to appreciate how thoroughly Collins went into these reports. They often received inquiries from him with regard to some comparatively unimportant or out of the way district, which they had omitted to mention in their report.

The keeping of accurate records of the Loan subscribers was rendered difficult by the unwillingness of people not publicly known to be sympathetic to allow their names to be

entered in the books. After a raid by English forces, in which some of the names of subscribers to the Loan were captured, it was learned that the Dublin Castle authorities were amazed and startled to find among them names of men whom they had looked on as their most loyal supporters.

The finding of safe premises as headquarters for the Loan was another problem. As will be narrated in the next chapter, a narrow escape of Collins from 76 Harcourt Street convinced him of the impossibility of carrying on there. For a time he conducted the business of the Loan from an office above the premises of Mrs. Wyse Power, 21 Henry Street, and he also used an office in the Land Bank for a time. Towards the end of 1919, through the instrumentality of Michael Noyk, a well-known Dublin solicitor, an intimate friend of Arthur Griffith, and one of the most devoted and trustworthy of men, he secured offices at 22 Henry Street, which remained his principal finance office up to its discovery by the Black and Tans shortly before the Truce. He also secured rooms in 29 Mary Street, on the premises of Geary and Co., milliners and drapers. In this latter place they devised a secret room, whose presence would never be suspected by a raiding party, and here they "dumped" their books and papers whenever a raid was feared. An office was later secured by him in 3 Saint Andrew Street, where George MacGrath carried on financial business. Here also was a hiding place in which a store of gold was kept.

To avoid discovery by the English Government

(who later conducted a searching enquiry into banking accounts), the Loan money had to be lodged in the name of various individuals. Among these were Mr. George Nesbitt, Mrs. MacGarry, Mr. Patrick Corrigan of 5 Camden Street, and Mr. Richard Tynan of 5 Wexford Street. Mr. Tynan's shop was used as a regular clearing house for money and literature in connection with the Loan.

As English repression and preventive measures became more drastic, the problem of transmitting sums of money from the remote districts became more pressing. In cases where bank managers were willing to co-operate, the Loan money was deposited in local banks, and drafts were forwarded by these banks to their Dublin branches, where agents of the Minister of Finance collected it. In other cases special messengers were sent to Dublin with the money. This was a risky proceeding, in view of the continuous searches by troops and police at railway stations, cross roads, and other points; but in no single case did any mishap occur. Sums of twenty thousand pounds and over, at a time, were brought up by messengers to Dublin, and safely delivered to Collins.

I have mentioned that on Michael Collins's arrival in Dublin, in 1916, he handed over a number of sovereigns to Sean MacDiarmuda, who was building up a "gold reserve" in anticipation of the Insurrection. Collins now found himself engaged in a similar task. He asked the various organisers to impress upon all our supporters the importance of getting all the

gold they could lay their hands on, and forwarding it to him. This was done with the amazing result that, in a country where paper was the only normal currency, he succeeded in getting together a sum of £25,000 in gold. This quantity of gold was enclosed in a number of boxes (including a small coffin), and buried secretly under the floor of Batt O'Connor's house.

The following correspondence between De Valera and Collins on the subject of the Loan is worthy of reproduction:—

“ September 6th, 1919.

“ A Mhichíl,

“ Only to-day, when I was drawing up form of application for American issue, did I notice (realise) that you propose that interest should be calculated *from* the day on which certificate *fully paid*.—It should be of course from the date of the recognition and evacuation.

“ I hope you have not made that mistake in your proposed issue in Ireland. The debt accumulated interest might be a very serious handicap later. We must look to the future.

“ E. DE VALERA.”

“ 16.IX.'19.

“ I see from printed prospectus to hand that you are undertaking the obligation of paying interest from the present time on till the evacuation and recognition. I am sorry it is so, but I suppose it is too late now to change it. It must not be so in *any* foreign

subscription. It will not be so in the American. I will send on a sample of our prospectus here when ready. I suggest it be made basis of issue in Australia etc.

“ EDV.”

“ October 6th, 1919.

“ My Dear Dev.

“ Your letter, written on the 6th September, has come to hand to-day. It suffered a delay of a week as a result of the English Railway Strike. This present communication will be despatched on Wednesday next, 8th inst.

“ Your remark with reference to the Interest Liability on the Loan Certificates—‘ It should be, of course, from the date of recognition and evacuation ’—astonishes me. So far as I am concerned, I was fully aware at the time of the liability we were incurring, and deliberately drafted the particular paragraph accordingly. Mr. Griffith, with whom I consulted to-day, says that he, too, was alive to what we were doing. So far as the Irish Issue is concerned, there certainly can be no question of alteration now. Actually, I am doubtful if any variation can be adopted for the Foreign issues either. Your letter will, of course, come up on Friday night.

“ Effort in connection with the Loan here is now achieving definite and satisfactory results. Taking them all round, the repressions have been of benefit to us. For the moment they have had the effect of delaying things somewhat, but the circumstances they produce

—requiring as they will a house-to-house canvass —will ultimately achieve better results. Of course it is an awful disadvantage to be excluded from the Press, as people do like to have the satisfaction of being able to say ‘they saw it in the paper.’

“Newspaper Articles. Mr. Griffith has promised a few for to-morrow. The enclosed, which I got myself from a very good friend of ours, strikes me as being rather apposite. There are points which may be used with very telling effect. You will readily see that Ireland fills the same place under many of the headings as she does under many of President Wilson’s declarations. You may use this article absolutely in any way you like. You may do any censoring or anything you think fit. The man who wrote it is going to do further similar things. You need not have the slightest hesitation in saying that it is of no value to you.

“All friends are well, most of them working very hard. I was at Greystones on Thursday evening last. All well there too, and cheerful in spite of everything.

“With all good wishes.

“Yours very sincerely,

“Mícheál O C.”

“Meadhon Foghmhair a 13, 1919

“My Dear Dev.

“Enclosed are—(a) Letter from Mrs. Dev.
(b) Communications from A.G. I am writing

direct to Harry, and it is important that you should see at least one of the notes.

"Yesterday there were raids all over the country. To-day a Proclamation of the Dail is out. Of course we don't know yet how the situation will work out under this, but presumably the position will be identical to that created by the German Plot proclamation last year.

"With very best wishes to you all.

"Sincerely yours,

M.C.

"P.S.—I was at Greystones on Sunday evening, and found all there well. It would have been edifying for you to have seen me fooling with the children."

"October 14th, 1919.

"My Dear Dev.

"With further reference to my letter of 6th inst., I have to inform you that yours of the 6th September was laid before the Ministry at its meeting on Friday night last.

"The entire position with regard to the Interest Payments was reviewed, and all present—Arthur Griffith, Cathal Brugha, W. T. Cosgrave, and Count Plunkett—were agreed that the statement on the Prospectus accepting liability for interest from the time full payment is made, was what was meant. In view of this, and of the fact that the prospectuses have been in circulation here and in Great Britain, that an advertisement is about to appear in the

'Chicago Daily Tribune,' in Paris, and that the Prospectus has gone to Australia, we are, I think, definitely committed to this liability. You will, I am sure, agree that, having in mind all this, it is not possible to alter the conditions of the Loan anywhere. In fact it would be very damaging if the issue in America were made on much more unfavourable terms than the issue in Ireland. I shall be eagerly waiting to hear from you on this subject.

"Enclosed please find—

"(a) Letter which I have to-day received from Dr. Fogarty for transmission to yourself.

"(b) Letter from Secretary of Dail.

"(c) Reprint of an Article by John J. Horgan, which appeared in 'Studies.' I hope this is what you require.

"You will be interested to hear that the enemy's chief offensive here at the moment is directed against the Loan. Men are now being arrested for making public reference to the subject. McCabe is in jail, awaiting trial, for having spoken in commendation of the Loan, and Etchingham is 'on the run' for the same offence. Things go well in a general way.

"Our friend, Mach, will be with you, I hope, very soon after this reaches you.

"With best wishes to you all.

"Yours very sincerely,

"M.C."

“ Deireadh Foghmhair 24 1919.

“ My Dear Dev.

“ Enclosed please find Article on ‘ Treatment of Political Prisoners,’ by the same man who wrote the Article on ‘ The Domestic Issue,’ which I sent you recently.

“ I said in my last letter to you that the enemy’s chief offensive was directed against the Loan. This continues to be true, but its vigour has been increased, and the arrests of people who have been active in Loan work have now reached quite a respectable figure. Still, the work is going ahead quite satisfactorily, and I am convinced that we shall get the money. It will, of course, take a much longer time than if we had been able to proceed uninterruptedly with the public campaign. Of course I never expected that we should be allowed to proceed without interruption.

“ I hope you received my letter containing the Police Minutes with reference to American Sailors, and that you have been making use of them.”

Despite the success of the Loan, we find Collins writing to Boland on the 19th April, 1920 :—

“ I append a draft statement of the Loan results in a general way up to date. These figures are the figures received at the head office only. This enterprise will certainly break my heart if anything ever will. I never imagined there was so much cowardice,

dishonesty, hedging, insincerity, and meanness in the world, as my experience in connection with this work has revealed.

“ With fondest wishes to you all.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ MICK.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

More Escapes

October—November, 1919

THE Irish prisoners in Belfast jail had abandoned their revolt at Christmas, 1918, on an undertaking by the representatives of the English Government that they would retain all their privileges as political prisoners, and, furthermore, that they would be transferred from Belfast to an internment camp. This undertaking was broken in a most shameful way. Some difficulty having arisen in the prison, in January, the prisoners were placed in irons and confined to their cells. *For five months* the prisoners were kept, each in his own cell, without being let out even for a while for exercise, a state of affairs calculated to undermine the strongest constitution. The prisoners contrived to communicate with one another by shouting from their cell windows and breaking holes in the partition walls; and messages and gifts were sometimes smuggled in to them. Of course Collins kept in touch with them.

At length, when the state of the prisoners' health had become alarming, they were shifted in June to Manchester Jail, where all their former privileges as political prisoners were restored to

them. Subsequently two prisoners, who had been isolated in Leeds and Birmingham respectively, D. P. Walsh and I, having successfully resisted an attempt to compel us to accept treatment as criminals, were transferred to Manchester Jail, to the company of the men taken from Belfast.

It is a theorem with prison-keepers that, while a man may serve twenty years in prison without once thinking of escaping, he who has once escaped is certain to attempt it again. This opinion was certainly justified in my case, for, from the time of my recapture in May, I was continually devising plans of escape, and, during my detention in Mountjoy, was in communication with Collins and Barton over several projects; and one of these, a particularly rash and unpromising one, would probably have been carried out but for my sudden removal to Birmingham in July. From Birmingham escape would have been easy, if I could have got into communication with friends outside; but my isolated position rendered this difficult. From the day of my arrival in Manchester Prison, early in August, I began to consider the possibility of all the Irish prisoners effecting an escape similar to that carried out from Mountjoy Prison. The conditions were very different; we were in an English city in the midst of a hostile population; but a captive lives on hope.

One of the two yards in which we took our exercise was surrounded by prison buildings. The other had on one side a very high wall, garnished with formidable iron spikes about

three feet long. From this it seemed evident that the other side of the spiked wall was external to the prison. To get over the spikes would be impossible ; but I noticed that another portion of the same wall, barely visible from where we took our exercises, was free from spikes, This portion of the wall, we subsequently ascertained, was in front of the female prison hospital, where an escape was not anticipated, but there was nothing but a six-foot railing between us and it. The question was—What was on the other side of the wall? Was it accessible from the street?

An opportunity of solving this problem speedily presented itself. In the middle of August Fionán Lynch, having completed his sentence, was released. Before he left I discussed my proposal with him and Stack, and he agreed to reconnoitre on the outside of the prison ; he also arranged a code for communication with us by letter, one of the points of the code being that the escape should be referred to as "the examination."

A couple of days after his release he wrote to us discussing his future prospects in the teaching profession. He said he had "studied the syllabus," and he was satisfied "the examination could be passed quite easily." This missive aroused some suspicion among the prison authorities, who guessed it was a "code message," but its real and (to us) obvious meaning seems never to have occurred to them.

Fionán had got in touch with Paddy O'Donoghue, of Manchester, who had assisted in

the escape of De Valera from Lincoln, and O'Donoghue took charge of all the arrangements as far as Manchester was concerned. Lynch proceeded to Dublin, and laid the matter before Collins, who took up the project of rescuing the prisoners with all his wonted energy and enthusiasm.

O'Donoghue began by sending us a map showing the outside and environs of the prison, baked in a cake. From this we learned that the wall in question separated us from a small side street off the main thoroughfare, and that on the other side of the street, opposite the spikeless portion of the wall, there was a piece of waste land or "common." For our part, we endeavoured to enlighten our friends outside as to that portion of the prison's interior in which we were confined. Our method of sending out messages was to write them on very small slips of paper, roll the notes into a ball, and conceal them in the hollows of our palms, passing them to our friends as we shook hands. Of course we had to know beforehand when visits from those "in the plot"—there were only two in Manchester, O'Donoghue and William MacMahon—were expected. Even our fellow-prisoners were not yet taken into our confidence; Stack and I thought it better to keep the thing to ourselves until our plans were perfected.

We had also devised a code for use in those letters in and out, which passed through the hands of the prison censor. In these Collins was "Angela," and O'Donoghue "Maud," and some of the seemingly innocent references to

lady relatives and friends were fraught with meaning for us.

Collins placed the matter before General Headquarters, and it was decided to send Rory O'Connor to Manchester to examine the plans of the projected escape. The prison authorities readily handed Stack a letter from his "loving cousin Maud," dated from a convent school in Lancashire, in which she informed him—

"We are all busy preparing for the examination. Professor Rory has arrived. He is a very nice man."

What could be more natural and innocent?

Some days later Collins arrived in Manchester, and proceeded, with characteristic audacity, to pay Stack a visit in prison, of course under an assumed name. Despite the presence of a warder, he contrived to give Stack a pretty good idea of the situation in Ireland, mentioning the fact that he was now living at his old address in Mountjoy Street, as the "G" Division were afraid to interfere with him. The dense ignorance of Englishmen, of the warder class, as to Irish affairs, rendered it easy to evade their censorship at interviews.

After much pondering and much debating, our plans took definite shape, and two prisoners, Mulcahy Lyons and Seumas Duggan, whose sentences expired at this time, were able to bring out elaborate verbal instructions to our friends outside. The remaining prisoners, besides Stack and myself, were Sean Doran, of Loughinisland, Co. Down (the refusal of political status to whom was the cause of the revolt of prisoners in Belfast

Jail in December, 1918) ; D. P. Walsh, of Fethard ; Paddy McCarthy, of Freemount, Co. Cork, subsequently shot dead by Black-and-Tans ; and Con Connolly, from Michael Collins's native Clonakilty, now a member of Dail Eireann. These four men were only informed of our project when the details had been fully worked out and decided on.

During the day time we took our exercise in charge of two warders, and had our meals in separate cells, but we were allowed to have our evening meal together, and then go out for a half-hour's additional exercise at five o'clock into the yard of the spiked wall. At this time all the other prisoners had been locked up for the night ; most of the warders were gone ; and only one warder was left in charge of us. It was decided that, at the moment when we had finished our supper, and the warder unlocked the door of the ward to let us out into the yard, he should be overpowered, tied up and gagged ; that we should then run to the wall at the point where the spikes were absent, and throw over a stone as a signal to those outside, who would then throw over a rope ; with this we could pull over a rope ladder and escape as in Mountjoy, with this difference, that our accomplices outside had to " hold up " a street in an English city, a street in which a number of warders' houses was situated.

One problem that baffled us was how the last man was to get down from the wall when there was nobody to hold the rope ladder on the inside. The wall was too high to think of jumping into

a blanket. We decided to tie the rope ladder to a railing outside the female hospital, but we were not certain whether this could be done. We recommended our friends outside to provide a patent ladder, which could be run up against the outside of the wall, but they were not convinced of the necessity of this, and failed to provide it, an omission which nearly proved fatal. The escape was fixed for Saturday, October 11th, at 5 p.m.

About four days before the appointed day Stack and I were called out to receive a visit from a "Mr. O'Brien," and found ourselves in the presence of J. J. Walsh, who had escaped with me from Mountjoy, and was then a "wanted" man. Walsh, who knew nothing of the projected escape, chatted with us on many topics, and, adopting a tone of raillery, threw us all into consternation by asking the warder—"Have these fellows tried to escape over the wall yet?" Stack, on the spur of the moment, thought to quell suspicion by telling the exact truth—"We're going to try it on Saturday," he said, in a tone intended to make the warder regard it as a joke. Whether he succeeded or not, there were several indications during the following few days that the prison authorities suspected we had some plot on foot.

One of the difficulties of the prisoners was to find plausible pretexts for sending out to friends those of their belongings which they could not carry with them when escaping, and did not wish to leave behind. Stack and I had sent our books and other property out by the two

released prisoners, Mulcahy Lyons and Duggan ; but the others, only learning of the plot in the last week, had to resort to various ruses to get articles they valued into safe keeping outside.

The appointed day arrived, and found us all in a state of tense excitement, which we tried to conceal by an air of hilarity, joking much and loudly. Just after dinner time, when we were out at exercise, Doran received a visit from O'Donoghue, who slipped him a note for Stack. The purport of the note was that there was a danger that the escape would have to be "called off"; that if, at three o'clock, we heard three whistles in the street outside, we were to regard the arrangements as cancelled; that we were to show those outside that we had heard the whistles by singing and cheering loudly.

At three o'clock the three whistles were distinctly heard, and Paddy MacCarthy, as pre-arranged, began to sing and shout wildly, in a manner the warders regarded as characteristic of a "mad Irishman."

We remained in a state of suspense till the following day, when some fruit and preserves were sent in for us—an unusual thing on a Sunday. We guessed the reason, and searching the things, discovered a message from O'Donoghue in a pot of jam. From this we learned that the men from Dublin, "with the stringed instruments" (*i.e.*, the rope ladder), had failed to turn up. The two men in question, Christie O'Malley and Owen Cullen, had duly arrived in Manchester, but by some misdirection failed to discover the correct place of rendezvous.

The abandonment of this first attempt was providential, as it would certainly have failed. Our friends outside had neglected to provide a patent ladder, and, as events showed, without this the escape would not have been possible, as a rope could not be thrown over to reach us. The postponement of the escape was also probably useful in allaying the suspicions of the prison authorities, and making them more easy-going.

A week passed without further word from outside, and we were ignorant whether the plan of escape had been abandoned altogether or only postponed. A number of bedsheets and blankets had been torn into strips for the purpose of tying up the warder. These were concealed under the mattresses of the plank beds, but we were living in daily fear of their discovery. At length, seeing no other means of communication, I wrote a letter through the ordinary prison post to "Michael Collins, 44 Mountjoy Street, Dublin," in which I complained that "the boys" seemed to have forgotten us, and asked for news of "all our friends." This brought a prompt reply from Collins, in which he gave me much news of a harmless nature, apologised for remissness in correspondence, and declared that he had been much upset by "Angela's disappointment." A couple of days later O'Donoghue sent in word that the escape was to take place on the following Saturday, October 25th.

Connolly, Doran and MacCarthy were entrusted with the task of tying up the warder, while Stack ran out to give the signals, D. P. Walsh

hammered wooden plugs into the keyholes of doors leading into the yard, so as to delay pursuit in case of an alarm, and I rigged up an easy passage over the railings of our ground with a plank bed so that the last three could clear it with a rapid bound.

All worked out according to plan up to a certain point. The warder in charge of us that evening, we were glad to see, was a stranger to us. It would have been unpleasant to have to handle roughly one of those warders with whom we had developed friendly relations. He was overpowered without trouble, secured with handcuffs (which had been obtained from an Irishman belonging to the Manchester Police, and smuggled in to us in butter), gagged and thrust into a cell, the door of which, like all English prison cells, locked automatically on closing. While Connolly, Doran and MacCarthy were securing him, the other three of us ran out to perform our allotted tasks, and we met almost simultaneously outside the female hospital at the point where the wall was unspiked. We waited with bated breath and beating hearts, our eyes fixed on the top of the very high wall. Presently a rope with a weight attached to it soared over the wall. The weight fell on our side, but it only brought the rope a few feet over the wall, and dangled twenty feet over our heads. The rope was pulled back and thrown again, but with no better result. A third time it was thrown, and this time they succeeded in getting it a couple of feet further; there it remained.

And now despair settled on us; we looked up

helplessly at the dangling rope so far beyond our reach. We had burned our bridges and there was no retreat ; the attempted escape was going to prove a ludicrous fiasco.

The couple of minutes that passed seemed hours to us, standing in broad daylight in a prison yard, overlooked by dozen of windows of cells and wards, expecting an alarm to be raised at any moment. Then to our relief a head appeared over the wall—that of Peadar Clancy, the same who had thrown over the rope to us at Mountjoy. Our friends outside had provided a patent ladder on the outside as an additional precaution ; without it our plan would have proved abortive.

At one glance Clancy realised the situation, and, climbing along the wall to the rope, lowered it to us. We speedily pulled over a rope ladder, and, as we did so, were joined by the other three prisoners. Stack mounted the rope and got over without mishap, beyond cutting his hands in sliding down the rope at the other side. I followed.

But our misfortunes were not yet over. Just as I grasped the top of the wall, and Walsh followed, a third prisoner sprang impatiently on the ladder. There was only one man holding the rope on the outside, and the combined weight of three was too much for him. He had to let the rope slip some feet to avoid being pulled up, and my arm, which was stretched across the top of the wall, got pinned to the wall by the rope, causing me great agony. I had some trouble in getting those behind me to understand

what had happened. They had to get back off the ladder until I released myself.

The wall was, I think, close on forty feet high. I slid down the rope, cutting my hands to the bone, and ran across the road to the waste ground, dimly visualising an almost deserted street, and a man in apron, shirt sleeves, and workmanlike garb in the centre; this was the man who had brought the patent ladder.

I was met by O'Donoghue, and directed down a side street; D. P. Walsh joined me; at the foot we were met by Neill Kerr, who pointed us out a taxi. The driver, who had been hired by O'Donoghue, was quite ignorant of the work he was employed on. George Lodge, a young Irishman, then resident in Manchester, introduced himself to us and Stack. Walsh and I were driven in the taxi with him to Piccadilly. Here he told us to walk on while he was paying the driver, so as not to attract attention; and we did this so effectually that we lost him, and were wandering about in the crowds ten minutes before we found him again. Ultimately Stack and I went out by tram with Lodge to his house in a remote suburb. Walsh was otherwise provided for. The other three fugitives, having been provided with bicycles, "got lost" in Manchester, and their adventures would fill a chapter. Suffice it to say that all got safely away.

Rory O'Connor was personally in charge of the rescue, and the other Dublin men present were Clancy, Christie O'Malley, and Owen Cullen. Twelve men from Liverpool assisted,

including Neill Kerr, his son Tom, and Steve Lanigan. The Manchester men were James Murphy, Dick Hurley William Concannon, Joe O'Sullivan, "Jock" and James MacGallogly, Mat Lawless, and Paddy O'Meara. William MacMahon though unable through illness to take part in the actual rescue, was a party to the plot from the start, and assisted in providing for the fugitives.

After a week's stay in Lodge's house, we were visited by Michael Collins, accompanied by Neill Kerr and William MacMahon. He told of the successful capture by surprise of two R.I.C. barracks in Meath, and promised to see that we were conveyed to Dublin without delay.

Three days later O'Donoghue, MacMahon and Lodge travelled with us by train to Liverpool. We played cards on the way to avert suspicion, and seemed a care-free holiday party. At Liverpool we were handed over to Neill Kerr and Lanigan, who conveyed us to the house of Mrs. MacCarthy, the same lady who had housed De Valera, after his escape from Lincoln. A few nights later, Ned Kavanagh, the sailor, smuggled us into a couple of bunks—his own and that of a comrade—in the forecastle of his ship, which was sailing for Dublin. The other sailors showed no curiosity; they were used to such smugglings. At six in the morning we arrived at Sir John Rogerson's Quay, where the ever-trustworthy Joe O'Reilly waited us with a motor.

We were driven to the house of Batt. O'Connor, and learned on the way from Joe that another detective, Wharton, had been shot in Stephen's

Green the previous night, but was only wounded "owing to the automatic jamming."

After a time Joe left us for the purpose of notifying Collins of our arrival. He came back later, in a state of consternation, to inform us that No. 76 Harcourt Street was raided, that the place was surrounded, and "Mick" was in the building.

Our anxiety at this news may be readily conceived, but it was speedily allayed by the arrival of "Mick" himself, carrying an attaché case, his clothes somewhat dusty and slightly torn, but all his wonted cheerfulness and energy radiating from him. He had had another of his wonderful escapes.

When the soldiers and police arrived at Harcourt Street the alarm was given, and the staff had time to conceal important papers in a secret closet in the thickness of the walls. Collins got up to the skylight by a ladder, and crossed the intervening roofs to the Standard Hotel. The skylight on the roof of the hotel, as I have already mentioned, was always left unfastened by the "boots"; but when he came to this he found it overhung the well-hole of the stairs, and to drop straight through meant certain death. His only resource was to hang from the skylight, swing his body, and then let go, trying to clear the railing of the stairs with a spring. He told us—"Just as I got through the hotel skylight I saw a khaki helmet appear out of the skylight of No. 76. I flung my bag across, commended myself to Providence, and jumped." He succeeded in

clearing the railing, but strained himself in jumping, and suffered from the injury for a long time afterwards. Once safely landed, he walked downstairs, and boarded a tram in Harcourt Street, while the raid was still in progress.

All the men found on the Harcourt Street premises were arrested, and next day sentenced to two months' imprisonment. They were nine in all—Dick McKee, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Fintan Murphy (Members of G.H.Q.), Frank Lawless, T.D.; Sean Hayes, T.D.; Sean O'Mahony, T.D., Patrick Sheehan, Michael Lynch and Dan O'Donovan.

Writing to a friend, Mr. Michael Ahern, of Clonakilty, some days later, Collins remarks:—

“ Yes, as you say, it was rather unfortunate about John Hayes, just because he happened to be in the Dail Offices. They made a clean sweep of the entire male staff, with the exception of the writer, who evaded them. You will be pleased to know that they got no documents of importance, so that the only disorganisation caused is through the seizure of the staff. The enemy is certainly very keen at the moment in preventing the Dail Loan being a success, so that it becomes a more pressing duty than ever that every supporter of the Republic should increase his efforts.”

CHAPTER XIX.

Guerilla Warfare

November—December, 1919

THE publication of "An tOglách," which had been suspended during my imprisonment, was now resumed. The Gaelic Press had been closed down by the British, and Collins conceived the idea of having the paper printed by ourselves. With this purpose, he commissioned Mr. Patrick Mahon, of Yarnhall Street, to purchase a set of type and a platen printing press, worked with a treadle. This machine was installed in a small room at the rear of the shop of a tobacconist named Donegan, 10A Aungier Street, a shop which shortly after passed into the hands of the Gleeson family. It was decided to take McKee from his employment, at M. H. Gill and Sons, and entrust him with the work of printing "An tOglach," thereby leaving him more time to attend to the work of the Dublin Brigade. His arrest caused a delay in putting this plan into operation, and, pending his release, "An tOglach" was printed by Patrick Mahon, who was engaged in printing literature and forms in connection with the "suppressed" National Loan for Collins.

Like De Valera, Stack came out of prison with no political experience, no proved ability in public affairs, but a fame based upon his success as a leader of jail strikes. He had been selected as honorary secretary of Sinn Fein while on hunger-strike in jail. He was now given a place in his Ministry by Griffith, with the title of "Minister of Home Affairs," and Cathal Brugha, as Minister of Defence, appointed him "Deputy Chief of Staff" of the Volunteers. This last position Stack never took very seriously. For some time after his escape he attended the meetings of G.H.Q., but apart from this took no steps to create a Department or make himself a factor in military affairs. In 1920, at the time when the arrival of the Black-and-Tans had made the military problem the principal one, he ceased to attend meetings of G.H.Q. altogether. The work of the Sinn Fein organisation he left for the most part to Pádraig O'Keeffe, the Acting Secretary. On the other hand the "Home Affairs" Department of Dail Eireann, under his control, became a very important one, with the rise of what were called the "Sinn Fein Courts," in 1920.

The great and growing prestige of Collins during the ensuing campaign seemed to evoke a strange resentment in the mind of Cathal Brugha; and Stack, after a time, became estranged from Collins, and associated himself with Brugha in hostility to him. This hostility was destined to have grave results at a later date. In the case of Stack, it was probable that some

caustic criticism which Collins made on the work of the "Home Affairs" Department was a factor in the estrangement.

By this time the curious title "I.R.A." had come into common use. Strictly speaking this popular name had no justification. The official title of the body so designated was always "Ogláigh na h-Eireann," or, in English, the "Irish Volunteers." On the election of Dail Eireann, however, which the Volunteers recognised as the lawful authority in the country, and the submission of their control to a Minister of Defence elected by the Dail, "An tOglách" began to refer to the Volunteers as "the Army of the Irish Republic," and this phrase became popularly transmuted into "Irish Republican Army" (a very different thing), and regularly abbreviated to "I.R.A."

The Irish Volunteers were, as has been pointed out, a self-governing body, whose constitution required an annual Convention. It had been found impossible to hold such a convention in 1918, but this year, despite the difficulty of bringing so many Volunteer officers up from the country without discovery by the police, it was decided by G.H.Q. to risk summoning a Convention. As usual, the work of making arrangements for this was left in the hands of Collins. As the result of his report on the difficulties and risks of carrying out the plan, it was decided to abandon it. He pointed out that many of the officers in the country were well-known to the R.I.C., and their movements watched; that their departure to Dublin would

be wired to Dublin Castle, and, among so large a body of men, some were bound to be shadowed to the place of meeting. All the members of G.H.Q. had learned to place an implicit confidence in Collins's opinion on matters of this sort, and when he, usually so hopeful, decided a plan was not feasible, it was felt there was nothing to do but abandon it.

This was the last attempt to hold a Convention of the Volunteers, until after the Treaty, when the whole subject of their control and future became a burning question which developed into civil war.

The shooting of Detective Officer Wharton, of the "G" Division, has been already mentioned. An ex-soldier of the British Army, named John Hurley, who was employed selling newspapers on Stephen's Green, was arrested by the British military authorities as responsible for the shooting. Hurley was not connected with Sinn Fein in any way, and, of course, knew nothing of the affair. He was a well-known figure as a newspaper-seller on the Green, and it was perfectly obvious that such a person would be the last man in the world to be selected for such a job; but his identification by a shell-shocked ex-officer, the only witness against him, was regarded as sufficient. The British authorities were determined to have a victim. Hurley was kept in custody some time before being brought to trial, during which efforts were made to induce him to make a statement implicating Collins in the shooting. When these efforts failed, Hurley

was courtmartialled and sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude. After the Treaty Collins secured his release, and he joined the Free State Army.

This was one of the many instances of the fallibility of British courts martial. It may be remarked here that *in every single case* where courts martial condemned a man to death on evidence of identification, as against an alibi, their verdict was incorrect; they showed an extraordinary instinct for choosing the wrong man as victim.

Wharton recovered from the wound, but a fresh sensation was created by the shooting dead of Detective-Sergeant Barton, in College Street, on November 29th. Lord French now offered a reward of £5,000 "for evidence leading to the conviction of any persons who committed the recent murders of policemen in Ireland." The reward remained unclaimed.

In fact Collins, after one year's work, had effectually paralysed the British Government's political spy system in Dublin, a system which had worked so effectively for so many years, and defeated all the efforts of Irish Separatists in the past. Half-a-dozen of the political detectives were in direct contact with Collins, and keeping him informed of every move; a number of others were in sympathy, while others, either through policy or fear, were careful not to show any great zeal in their work. Those few, who were disposed to be active against us, could only operate at the risk of their lives. Collins met detectives regularly every week at

Tomás Gay's house, in Clontarf, and was kept informed of all that was going on in Dublin Castle.

At their wits' end, the British authorities decided on their old resort, a "big round-up." A list of "prominent Sinn Feiners" to be arrested was prepared, but every movement of the British forces was known beforehand to Collins, who sent messengers on the night of the projected "round-up" to all Volunteer officers in Dublin, warning them not to sleep at home. A series of raids took place, but proved a fiasco. Only two arrests were made—Alderman Tom Kelly, T.D., and Sam Irwin. An Irish correspondent of the London "Globe" remarked:—"Every step taken by the Castle is known an hour afterwards. It is almost enough to make sane men believe in spirits."

After several abortive raids on the Headquarters of Dail Eireann and of Sinn Fein, in Harcourt Street, apparently in the hope of capturing Collins, the British authorities ordered both buildings to be closed down, and the front doors were solemnly nailed up.

By this time attacks on R.I.C. patrols and posts had greatly increased in frequency throughout the country, so that, as "An tOglách" pointed out, the Volunteers were now waging a species of guerilla warfare against Britain's armed force in Ireland.

It should be remembered that, for three years after the Insurrection of 1916, the workers for Ireland's independence had confined themselves to political activities, passive resistance, and a

few bloodless "coups," and all the violence was on the part of the English. During these years many Irishmen were killed and wounded by English forces, there were thousands of arrests for "political" offences, countless raids on private houses, proclamations, prohibitions, courts martial, and deportations. Meetings were broken up everywhere, national newspapers suppressed, national leaders imprisoned and subjected to treatment as criminals, unarmed people tracked, chased and harried by armed forces. During all this time there were no attacks on British forces. As Collins said in his "New York American" articles—"During these two years the only disorder and bloodshed were the work of the British forces."

In face of this savage persecution and suppression, Sinn Fein succeeded in scoring an overwhelming victory at the polls. Dail Eireann was set up, and proceeded to function peaceably, with the authority of the citizens behind it. To quote Collins again:—"At the General Election of 1918 the Irish Parliamentary Party was repudiated by the Irish people, by a majority of over 70 per cent., and they gave authority to their representatives to establish a National Government. The National Government was set up in the face of grave difficulties. Dail Eireann came into being. British law was gradually superseded.

"At first the British were content to ridicule the new Government. Then, growing alarmed at its increasing authority, attempts were made to check its activities by wholesale political arrests,

The final phase of the struggle had begun. . . .

"For all the acts of violence, committed in Ireland from 1916 to 1921, England, and England alone, is responsible. She willed the conflict, and fixed the form it was to take.

"On the Irish side it took the form of disarming the attackers. We took their arms and attacked their strongholds. We organised our Army, and met the armed patrols and military expeditions, which were sent against us, in the only way possible. We met them by an organised and bold guerilla warfare."

In short, all open organisation was driven underground, and the Irish people, having peacefully voiced their claim to freedom by a large majority, in the most unmistakeable manner possible, and being replied to by savage coercion, were compelled to meet force with force.

The following passage from the leading article of "An tOglách," in the first issue after its re-appearance, shows how the situation presented itself to Volunteers at the time :—

"A year ago we compared the Irish Volunteers to an army in the trenches, whose activities were confined to occasional trench raids and sniping. Since then the raids and sniping have greatly increased in frequency ; in fact a situation has been created which more resembles guerilla warfare than a trench blockade.

"This shows how ludicrously ineffective has been the enemy's campaign of military 'frightfulness' in Ireland. He has tried to

terrorise and rule the Irish people by a policy of raids and captures ; he has been shown that two can play at that game, and his spies and agents have learned that their occupation is a dangerous one. It has been found that zeal in the service of England does not pay in this country.

“ We are meeting the enemy’s warfare on our people with firmness. We are giving him back blow for blow.

“ Our soldiers have grown wonderfully efficient in adapting themselves to changed conditions, and meeting every move of the army of occupation. The superiority of the enemy in numbers and arms need not daunt us ; we are able to adopt methods which render his military activities against us ineffective. We have an immense advantage in being in our own country, among our own people, and the enemy in vain seeks to lure us into a position in which he can bring his immense superiority in numbers and armament into play against us.

“ We will strike in our own way, in our own time. If we cannot, by force of arms, drive the enemy out of our country at the present moment, we can help to make his position impossible, and his military activities futile.”

Attacks on barracks grew frequent. In Meath two barracks were captured by surprise, and arms and ammunition taken away. The R.I.C. were, as they had always been, the right arm of the

British power in Ireland. Sprung from the people, but trained to spy on and hate the people, armed with deadly weapons, living in barracks, their strongholds scattered even through the remotest villages of the country, they formed at the same time an efficient intelligence force, and a wonderfully organised garrison for the British Government. Their devotion to their employers in the hateful task of holding their countrymen in subjection seemed unbounded; their courage and discipline had never been called in question; they had suppressed the Fenian rising of 1867, without much difficulty; they had carried out with brutality and success all the coercions and violence against the popular movement in Parnellite days. But the hour of their downfall, the hour when they were to collapse before the organised revolt of an indignant people, was now at hand.

The attacks on barracks caused the British authorities much uneasiness. Owing to the policy of social ostracism of the R.I.C., adopted by Sinn Féin, it was difficult to get new recruits for that force, and yet more and more barracks had to be closed down in the more remote districts.

In the beginning of January, 1920, Carrigtwohill Barracks, in Co. Cork, the first to be captured in open fighting, surrendered after a few hours' siege. The barracks was destroyed by fire, and the R.I.C. garrison, after being disarmed, was released. This capture was the precursor of many others, such as at Ballytrain, Co. Monaghan, and Castlemartyr, where fights lasting several

hours ensued, and the attackers ultimately made a breach in the wall with explosives, and fought their way in. In all such cases the R.I.C. were only disarmed and released.

During all this period a strike of motor drivers was going on throughout Ireland against a military regulation, issued in November, requiring them to have special permits. The strike lasted three months, but eventually collapsed, but the need for military permits for motors did not seriously hamper the work of the Volunteers.

For some time Collins had been able to get definite information as to the movements of Lord French, the English Lord Lieutenant, and it was felt by G.H.Q. that, if we were justified in striking at the agents of British rule in Ireland, who were waging war on our nation, we were especially justified in striking at the head of the British machinery of violence against us. Accordingly it was decided by G.H.Q. to attack Lord French. In view of misleading statements, made in a recent publication, it is necessary to emphasise the fact that the projected attack on Lord French was the unanimous decision of G.H.Q., and that reports as to his plans and activities in the matter were regularly submitted by Collins to meetings of Headquarters.

Lord French never travelled anywhere without a strong bodyguard, and the most elaborate precautions were taken for his safety. Despite the strict secrecy observed as to his movements, Collins was often able to learn of places he proposed to go to, routes he was likely to take,

and trains he would travel by, and parties of Volunteers, armed with pistols and bombs, lay in wait for him and his escort at some point on the route by which he was expected. These preparations proved continually abortive, as Lord French or his advisers frequently changed their plans at the last moment, and in travelling through the city he usually selected a route by which his approach was not likely to be expected. A close watch was also kept on the Vice-Regal Lodge, without much tangible results.

Generally speaking, the ambushing parties consisted only of "The Squad," but these were sometimes reinforced by some Tipperary Volunteers then "on the run" in Dublin, including Dan Breen and Sean Treacy. On one occasion Collins learned of a projected journey of Lord French's through the city, at such short notice, that he went out himself to attack Lord French with the first few companions who came to hand. One of these was Tomas MacCurtáin, afterwards Lord Mayor of Cork. On this occasion, as frequently before, Lord French failed to "keep his appointment," and his would-be ambushers had to wait for him in vain.

At length, however, Collins learned that Lord French, who had been spending some time at his country residence, at Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon, would be returning to the Vice-Regal Lodge, in the Phoenix Park, on December 19th. Despite the secrecy preserved on the subject, Collins ascertained the train by which he would travel, and the station at which he would arrive—Ashtown. An ambushing party

were sent out to lie in wait for him at Ashtown Cross.

Ashtown Station is situated in the open country, on the North side of Dublin, over two miles from the city. It affords a convenient and private approach to one of the gates of the Phoenix Park, not far from the Vice-Regal Lodge. The road from the railway station to the gate of the Park is crossed by the road running out from Dublin to Blanchardstown, this point being known as "Ashtown Cross." Here there is a rural tavern known as the "Half-way House." This was the point selected by the ambushing party for their attack. The ambushing party consisted only of eleven men.

It was assumed that Lord French's car would be preceded by his armed guard, and it was planned to let the first car go by, block the road with an old cart, and concentrate on attacking the second car, which, it was believed, would contain Lord French. These calculations were upset by the fact that Lord French actually travelled in the first car.

Lord French's train arrived in Ashtown Station some minutes before the expected time, and the attackers had to take up their positions along the hedge at the side of the road very hastily. Three of their number, Tom Keogh, Martin Savage and Dan Breen, were detailed to wheel the old cart across the road. At this moment a policeman, who had been sent out from the Vice-Regal Lodge, apparently to keep the road clear of the traffic for Lord French, arrived on the scene. Imagining that the

men at the cart were country folk engaged in rural business, he approached and ordered them to leave the road clear for "his Excellency." Not wishing to hurt the poor policeman, they were urging him to go away quietly, when one of the party behind the hedge very injudiciously flung a bomb at the policeman. The force of the explosion knocked him down, and also the three Volunteers who were out on the road. The sound of the exploding bomb was a signal to the first car from the station to put on speed, and it passed at a terrific speed amid a shower of bullets. Detective Sergeant Halley, Lord French's personal attendant, who sat beside the driver, was wounded in the finger, but the other occupants escaped unhurt. This car, as afterwards transpired, contained Lord French, who was accompanied by a lady and some officers, but the attackers had no suspicion of this, believing it only contained a portion of the armed guard.

It was not now possible to push out the old cart in time to stop the second car, but a determined attack was made on it in the open. Bombs were flung into it. The car ran up on the ditch and the driver surrendered. The attackers believed that this car contained Lord French, and that he and the other occupants were out of action. They were unaware that its only occupant had been the driver. Before they could proceed further the third car, containing an armed guard of four soldiers with rifles, and a fifth with a machine

gun, arrived and opened fire. There was an exchange of shots in which Martin Savage, who had remained out on the road without cover throughout the combat, was shot dead. Then the third car passed on to the Park, leaving the attackers in possession of the field, and under the belief that they had been completely successful. As they had no means of conveyance save push bicycles, they had to leave the dead body of Savage behind them, and return to Dublin as best they could.

It was inevitable that Lord French, as the representative of a usurping Government, and head of the armed forces which were waging war on the Irish people, should be attacked. All the acts of violence against the nation to which I have referred, from the advent of French, were done in his name and by his authority. It is difficult to grasp the mentality of those who have described this daring attack as an "attempted assassination." It was an attack by a tiny handful of men—eleven all told—on a strongly armed body of soldiers and police in armour-plated cars, who were perfectly aware that they were liable to such an assault; and those who carried it out faced a double risk, the risk of death in action, and the risk of death if captured.

Public opinion was shown by the verdict of the jury at the inquest on Martin Savage. They found that he was "killed in an attack on Lord French," and tendered their sympathy to his relatives. It was shown at the inquest that he

was a young man of exemplary character, and his death was due to his daring courage.

From his advent in Ireland Lord French was attended by a bodyguard—a precaution which, despite all the fables of English journalists, was never taken by Collins—not even during the Civil War. It is stated that after the attack at Ashtown, and up to his departure from Ireland, Lord French, the representative of British royalty, never travelled by train and never ventured abroad, save in an armour-plated car with a strong escort. In fact, it was justly remarked at this time that “Lord French, who cannot go anywhere without an escort, is much more ‘on the run’ than Mick Collins, who goes openly round Dublin alone.”

The state of panic created among British troops by the Ashtown affair was curiously illustrated a few days later, when the English Press teemed with sensational accounts of an “attack on the Vice-Regal Lodge,” in which a British officer and one of the attackers had been killed. There was no attack. Nervous soldiers, in the darkness, imagining themselves surrounded by creeping Sinn Feiners, accidentally shot their own officer, Lieutenant Boast, and bayoneted to death an unfortunate civilian named Kennedy who was proceeding homewards through the Park. A coroner’s jury found that Boast was accidentally killed by one of his own party, and that Kennedy was killed “on his way home” by the military patrol, adding that “the military had acted in a most heartless manner.” It was admitted by the soldier witnesses that

Kennedy, who was deaf, had received "a jab of a bayonet," and that, after he was shot down, he was again fired on by two soldiers while crawling along the ground, and "finished off." The English Press which had published the story of an attack on the Vice-Regal Lodge, for the most part ignored this later revelation.

CHAPTER XX.

Spies and Informers

January—March, 1920

DURING the autumn Collins, as has been mentioned, had thought it safe to go back to live in his old lodgings, the private hotel of Miss McCarthy, 44 Mountjoy Street, but by December it had become unsafe for him to sleep there. He used, however, to drop into the house in the day time for clothes and other belongings. Arriving there one morning, he found the place being raided by a party of military, who were looking for him. This was the second time he had had that experience at 44 Mountjoy Street, the first being the night of the "German Plot" round-up. On this latter occasion Collins, with characteristic coolness, stood waiting among the crowd who were looking on until the raiders departed empty-handed, and then entered the house. Subsequently, on his way to Cullenswood House, Ranelagh, where he did his office work at this time, he called into the office of the "Evening Telegraph," and gave the sub-editors an account of the raid. It is probable that this raid was due to information supplied to the British authorities by Quinlisk, the first "informer" to appear on the scene, and, as far as Collins was concerned, the last.

Quinlisk, who for some reason usually called himself "Quinn," was an ex-corporal of the Royal Irish Regiment in the British Army, who, while a prisoner of war in Germany, had joined Sir Roger Casement's "Irish Brigade." After his return to Ireland he was for some time supported from a fund established by Sinn Fein, and later received financial help from Collins. In November this man addressed the following letter to "The Under Secretary, Dublin Castle":

" 21 Gardiner's Place,
" Dublin,
" 11th November, '19.

Sir,

"I have been forced by circumstances to write to you. I would have come personally, but if I were seen entering the Castle my life would, perhaps, afterwards be in danger. I was the man who assisted Casement in Germany, and since coming home I have been connected with Sinn Fein. I have decided to tell all I know of that organisation and my information would be of use to the authorities. The scoundrel Michael Collins has treated me scurvily and I now am going to wash my hands of the whole business. If you accept my offer then, please send a man one who can be trusted to the above address on tomorrow evening at four o'clock. I am living there under the name of Quinn.

" I am yours faithfully,

" H. QUINLISK,
" Late Corpl. the Royal Irish Regt."

This letter, marked "Secret" and "Very Urgent," was placed in the hands of Superintendent Brien of the Dublin Metropolitan Police to deal with, and he got in touch with Quinlisk.

Quinlisk now visited the Detective Headquarters in Brunswick Street, and was taken thence in a cab to Dublin Castle to interview Superintendent Brien. The information he gave in Brunswick Street was given to Broy to type, and he transmitted it to Collins.

The would-be informer now began to play an extraordinary double game. He acknowledged to Collins the fact that he had an interview with Brien, alleging that he had been approached by the latter when he went to the Police Headquarters, in Brunswick Street, to see about getting a passport for America, and that he was only playing with Brien, to see what his game was. He apparently hoped to keep in with both sides and extract money from both, and, having gained Collins's confidence by "giving away" Dublin Castle on minor matters, to get an opportunity of selling him. It was an ingenious plan for explaining his interviews with Brien, which, he knew, were likely to be reported to Collins. The following extraordinary letter to Sean O'M., whom he knew to be in touch with Collins, shows the curious mentality of the man. (It will be noted that he always refers to Brien as "O'Brien").—

“ 48 Eccles Street,

“ Dublin,

“ 13.12.'19.

“ A Chara,

“ I left a note at your place, or rather wrote a letter on Thursday night and I called at your office the following day but you weren't there. O'Brien saw me on Thursday evening, and to my astonishment he threatened me with leading him by the nose. He said that I had telephoned at about half past eight on Wednesday asking him to come up to 48, as I had something important to tell him. He couldn't come so he made an A.P. for Parliament Street, and waited in the pouring rain for some time, but I failed to turn up. I made excuses, and said I was of the opinion he wouldn't stir out in such weather. He then suddenly said :—‘ Well, who was your Ambassador ? Because,’ said he, ‘ the only other person in the street was a tall stout man, soft hat, frieze coat, and leggings, and that man watched me.’ My mind jumped at once to you, but, of course, what your object was I don't know. In any case he asked me could I explain the affair, and of course I assured him that it was just a coincidence. He then said, ‘ Now be careful of the way you play your game, and don't fool me again.’ He then asked me if I was prepared to close with his offer, and endeavour to find out where Collins was stopping, for, said he, where he is the others are, too. He said further that the next business would be on a large scale. I asked

him what he meant, and he said if he had to search every house in Dublin he would do it. He made no mention this time of swearing falsely against anyone. It's a pity I can't get two trustworthy men, and I'd invite the boys to come to 48, and we'd finish him off."

Then follows an appeal for more money to the man whose life he was preparing to sell. He writes—"There's no work to be had. For God's sake, Sean, ask Michael Collins to help me once more." His letter concludes—"By the way, you see my words came true that a round up would take place on Thursday. I'll show that old Schweinhund up some day."

Apparently his hopes of extracting money from the Dublin Castle authorities receded, and, in a fit of spite, he wrote a statement to the "Freeman's Journal," intended to injure Brien. Collins learned of this statement. It was returned by the "Freeman's Journal" to Quinlisk, and was intercepted in transmission. The following is the document—

"In view of the fact that large numbers of the Irish people do not credit statements made at various times by certain individuals, who were acting at the time in official capacities, I feel it my duty to expose the methods adopted by the authorities in Dublin Castle, in order to secure arrests of so-called political prisoners, or to obtain later on evidence against persons arrested and charged with whatever crimes the authorities may

deem fit to saddle upon them. Since I came home from Germany, where I spent the five years of the War, I have been living a rather hand to mouth existence in Dublin City. At times I received donations of money from the Committee of Sinn Fein, who recognised the losses I had sustained, through joining the Irish Brigade formed in Germany. Naturally I couldn't expect such monetary donations to continue, and was not surprised when about six weeks ago they ceased. I was at the time out of employment, and, not knowing what to do, went to the Detective Office of the D.M.P., Brunswick Street, where I applied for passports to America or Germany. The officer in charge, having entered up all details concerning me, told me to wait until the Superintendent came. I began to suspect something, as the officer in charge had looked curiously at me, when he heard that I had been in the German Irish Brigade. At about half past six another Superintendent came to me, and told me that it would be necessary for me to see the Chief Commissioner. He then sent for a cab, and I was taken to Dublin Castle. I was now determined to see the matter out, and accordingly when I was ushered into the presence of the Chief of the Detective Department, Superintendent O'Brien, I was as calm and urbane as if I had been aware that I was to be taken there. The Officer who had brought me now went away, and I was left alone with Mr. O'Brien. He was very affable, and began to talk about Germany, and hundreds

of things which I can't remember. At last he asked me if I had been mixed up with Sinn Fein long, and if I knew anything about those men who were committing the police murders. I replied evasively, and he said, 'Sinn Fein has let you down, now it's up to you to get your own back, you will benefit materially, and will also be doing good for your country.' He then questioned me as to the possibility of Mr. Michael Collins, M.P., staying at the Munster Hotel or Vaughan's, and whether I could advise him as to what time he should raid any place where Collins would be likely to stay. He then told me that the authorities considered Collins to be the moving spirit in all raids and attacks on police, and offered me £20, and promised me to influence Colonel Johnstone to make an application to the War Office to annul the Order whereby I had forfeited my arrears of pay as a Corporal whilst in Germany, if I could do my best to help him in locating and arresting Collins or any other of the Sinn Fein leaders. I listened carefully to all he said, and went away leaving him under the impression that, if not exactly won over, I was at least wavering. For some days I endeavoured to obtain an interview with Mr. C., but without success, so I then went and told a friend of his, Mr. O'M. The latter advised me to be careful of myself, but neither told me to carry on visiting at Dublin Castle or to disappear. At the latter end of November I received a note from Superintendent O'Brien, inviting me to come to the Castle.

I went and was shown into his office at the Lower Yard. He asked me if I had succeeded in locating Collins, and told me that Colonel Johnstone was prepared to give me £50 if Collins were arrested, and a much larger sum of money if I would swear that I had seen Mr. C. interviewing certain men, and giving money and instructions to those men before raids were carried out or policemen shot. The following Sunday morning a raid was carried out at 44 Mountjoy Street, where Mr. Collins generally stopped, but no arrests were made. The headquarters of the Irish Parliament were also raided without result. I again went to Mr. O'M., and told him word for word what O'Brien had said, and the infamous suggestions he had made to me. Mr. O'M. was, needless to say, shocked, and then told me not to go anywhere near the Castle. On Tuesday evening, the 9th of this month, I was again summoned to the Castle, where Superintendent O'Brien asked me if I could give him any information regarding the plans for a guerilla warfare, which was to be carried out by the Volunteers on the following day or Thursday. I said it was possible that such an affair was planned, but that I didn't know anything about it. He then asked me if I knew where Collins was staying, and if he raided the houses of . . . and others, would he be successful in capturing anybody. I told him to try it, and he said that if any men were captured it would frighten the others. He then asked me if I were willing to swear information against Mr.

Collins or any of his colleagues, whom I knew to be Members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I said it was a grave matter, and might mean being branded as an informer. He replied that I need not live in Ireland, and, during my stay in Dublin, he would give me a permit to carry arms. I did not take the permit, however. On Wednesday night I met Mr. O'M. and told him all. On Thursday morning raids were carried out on an extensive scale, and Dublin Castle was made a laughing stock of. In giving this account of how Dublin Castle endeavours to do their nefarious work in Ireland, I am actuated only by the desire to open the eyes of our own people, and of the English. That Mr. O'Brien should calmly suggest to me that I swear falsely against my own countrymen, and be rewarded by immunity and monetarily, shows what respect those very people have for the law, which it is their duty to uphold and maintain. I invite Mr. O'Brien to repudiate the statements made by me, but I'm afraid he will lie low like Brer Rabbit. I'm not in the least worried about the consequences of this letter, and am prepared to back it up by statements from Mr. O'M. and other gentlemen.

“ (Signed) H. W. QUINN.

“ 48 Eccles Street,
“ Dublin.”

It will be noted that the known facts as to how Quinlisk got into touch with Superintendent

St. James River
March 1871

Secret

6.

to you. There are two persons, at least, who were
able to call my attention to this information, in brief
but to make me aware of the extent of the damage and
the serious consequences of the same. I am sure that
the Government will be able to investigate
and my own mind is at ease as regards the matter.
The Government has been very kind to me
and I am very glad to have my friends
be so kind to me. If you see it my report
then, please send it to me, one more time. I trust
for the same address as the morning of the
last week. I am sure you will be very
kind to me.

'Am up & waiting

2. *Acacia* v

the Spl. the Royal New York.

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM QUINLISK, THE INFORMER.

Brien are at variance with this statement of his. There can be no doubt that it was from Quinlisk that the Castle authorities first learned the real position occupied by Collins, and the importance of capturing him.

About the beginning of February, however, Quinlisk, apparently unable to extract money from Dublin Castle without producing results, became desperate, and determined to earn the reward for the capture of Collins. He besieged all persons whom he knew to be in touch with Collins for information as to his whereabouts, declaring he had important information for him which he could only disclose to his own ears. One of the persons whom he approached was Eamonⁿ Fleming, Organiser for Leinster of the National Loan. When Fleming reported to Collins that Quinlisk was seeking an interview, Collins at first confined himself to putting him off with the story that he was not in Dublin, but it afterwards occurred to him to test his suspicions of Quinlisk by laying a trap. Accordingly Fleming, by his instructions, revealed to Quinlisk, after much pretended hesitation, that Collins was in Cork, and stopping in Wren's Hotel, Winthrop Street.

Next morning a cipher message was sent to the District Inspector of the R.I.C. in Cork from Dublin Castle. This message was intercepted by Collins and decoded. It was an instruction that Collins was in Wren's Hotel, and that the place was to be surrounded and raided.

Quinlisk had travelled by train to Cork the

same morning, and immediately proceeded to Wren's Hotel, where he could find no trace of Collins. Meanwhile Superintendent Brien, having retired from the force, had handed over the letter from Quinlisk offering to betray Collins to another official, and the document reached Collins by the usual channels, giving further confirmation, if any were needed, of the wretched man's guilt. Instructions were sent to the Cork Volunteers to deal with him. He was arrested by them, and executed on February 18th.

At this time the rooms of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League, 46 Parnell Square, proved a useful rendezvous to Collins and his associates, most of whom were members of the Branch. Irish classes were held here nightly, and, after teachers and most of the members had departed, some young men used to linger behind for a game of cards. Under cloak of this Collins used to meet Intelligence Officers and members of "The Squad" here nightly from 11 o'clock till after midnight, an important time, as military raids on private houses usually took place from 1 a.m., till morning. From this centre Collins sent out messages to men who were to be arrested, warning them not to sleep at home. I myself have borne such messages on more than one occasion.

One night, in December, Collins learned of preparations in the Castle for a raid to take place at the unusually early hour of eleven. There was some fear that the place where we were might be the objective of the raid, and we thought it better to vacate the building. The

raid proved to be directed against the office of the "Freeman's Journal," which was served with notice of its suppression for publishing "false statements and statements likely to cause disaffection." After a certain interval the "Freeman's Journal" was allowed to re-appear.

On this night an amusing incident occurred, illustrating the curious conditions under which Intelligence work had to be done. Tobin and Cullen shadowed two "G." men from Brunswick Street, but the detectives turned up a side street and disappeared. The two men were Broy and MacNamara, who were not yet known to Tobin or Cullen. They were actually on their way to convey a message to Collins, and took special precautions to avoid being shadowed by English spies.

Besides the Keating Branch, Vaughan's Hotel, only a short distance away, remained a favourite rendezvous of Collins and his associates. At this period Mrs. Vaughan sold the hotel to a Mr. Thomas McGuire, of Limerick, and, the latter being a stranger, it was some time before the hotel became a regular resort of ours again; but ultimately Mr. McGuire became a warm friend and admirer of Collins, and he and his wife were to give proof of their staunchness at a later period of trial.

Collins at this period, besides being Minister of Finance, and having his hands full with the work of the National Loan, occupied the three positions of Adjutant General, Director of Organisation, and Director of Intelligence in the Volunteers, besides doing much of the work

which properly belonged to the Department of the Quartermaster-General. This list of activities will give some idea of the gigantic energy of the man. The work of Intelligence grew more important and engrossing daily, and he found it necessary at this time to resign the Directorship of Organisation. Accordingly he handed his organisation papers over to another Volunteer officer, who, by some extraordinary fatality, lost them in a Dublin street. These papers contained the names and addresses of all Volunteer officers in Ireland, and their capture would practically mean the smash up of the organisation. The papers were found by an English workingman, resident in Dublin, who, somewhat alarmed at his discovery, consulted friends as to what he should do in the matter. One of his acquaintances happened to be in touch with the Volunteers, and news of the discovery was conveyed to Collins, who promptly took steps to recover them and frighten their finder into silence on the subject.

It was now recognised by the British that their own police and detective organisations in Ireland were undermined and had broken down in the conflict with "Sinn Fein." The ineffectiveness of the "G" Division, so potent in the past, brought it into discredit and suspicion. Mr. William C. Forbes Redmond was brought down from Belfast as Second Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, to reorganise the detective force. Mr. Redmond proved the most formidable opponent that Collins had yet encountered. He threw

great energy and efficiency into his work during the four weeks that he held the post. Unconsciously emulating Collins, he travelled round Dublin on a bicycle. Distrusting the existing "G" Division, he formulated an ambitious scheme to strengthen the force of political detectives by importations from the R.I.C. of Belfast. After he had been only a few days in Dublin he came very near to capturing Collins, as will be shown, but every move of his was known to Collins, through his friends of the "G" Division. Collins remarked: "If we don't get that man he'll get us, and soon."

Simultaneously with Redmond a still more dangerous agent of the English Government had arrived in Dublin. This was the very clever British Secret Service man, Burn, who, under the name of "Jameson," had been posing in English Labour circles as a Bolshevik. Burn, or Jameson, as we shall call him, was a remarkable type of the *agent provocateur* and had been admitted into the counsels of the organisers of the British Police strike. He was an ex-soldier, and succeeded in winning the confidence of Art O'Brien, our representative in London, by offers to secure arms "to help the revolution in Ireland." He got from O'Brien a letter of introduction to Collins, armed with which he proceeded to Dublin. Collins received him favourably, and, for a time, was quite impressed by his "schemes." He pretended to be in touch with the Soviet Government in Russia and to have large sums of money at his disposal. He offered to obtain a number of machine guns,

and gave the names of soldiers in various barracks in Dublin and other parts of Ireland, who, he said, would help.

Although trusting him and recommending his services to G.H.Q., Collins had the wisdom to deal with him chiefly through his lieutenants, Tobin and Cullen, and this precaution probably saved his life. Cullen, at his very first meeting with Jameson, conceived a distrust of the man.

At this time (January, 1920) Collins had transferred his office from Cullenswood House, Ranelagh, to No. 6 Mespil Road, the residence of Miss Patricia Hoey, a well-known journalist prominent in Sinn Fein circles, and her mother. From here he used to cycle for his lunch to Batt. O'Connor's house, in Brendan Road, Donnybrook. Collins met Jameson by appointment at O'Connor's during the luncheon hour, and had an interview with him. A fresh appointment was made for the morrow at the same time and place.

Next day at the appointed time Mr. Redmond had a special detective posted at the top of the street watching O'Connor's house, while a raiding party of detectives in a lorry set out from the Castle for the house. It happened that just before the lorry arrived Jameson, having concluded his interview with Collins, left the house accompanied by Tobin. The detective, who was afraid to approach too near, seeing two men emerge and go down the street, concluded that one of the two was Collins. He hastened down Morehampton Road to meet the approaching lorry, and, seeing it coming, signalled to the

driver to stop. When they drew up he approached Redmond and told him that "the bird had flown"; that they had better turn back quickly without attracting attention, and come next day at the same hour. All this time Collins was still in O'Connor's house, oblivious of danger.

The lorry turned back. One of the detectives on the raiding party was MacNamara, a devoted agent of Collins's, who duly reported the occurrence to him. He also reported that Redmond had lectured his detectives on their alleged inability to locate Collins, and declared that "a man only just across from London had been able to see him"—apparently referring to Jameson. Collins determined to play a trick on Redmond.

Next day, as the luncheon hour drew near, a detective hung about Morehampton Road, the route by which Collins usually approached the house in Brendan Road. Seizing a favourable moment, Collins cycled rapidly past the detective and turned down Brendan Road. Putting on speed, he reached the other end, and was out of sight before the detective could reach the top of the road. Not seeing him, the detective naturally concluded that he had entered the house as usual.

The raiding party led by Redmond arrived in a lorry, sure of their prey, but were astonished to find nobody in the house save Mrs. O'Connor and her children. They searched the house from top to bottom, and even raided the house next door, but in vain. Redmond showed every sign of chagrin. Leaving, he remarked to Mrs.

O'Connor that "he would not be troubling her again," a remark which proved prophetic. That night, accompanied by MacNamara, he watched outside O'Connor's house after midnight, and listened at the windows in the hope of overhearing something.

Three nights later Mr. Redmond, who wore bullet-proof armour under his clothes, was shot dead in Harcourt Street, while approaching the Standard Hotel where he was staying.

This definitely ended the effective use of the Dublin Police as a political espionage force against Sinn Fein. Mr. Redmond's successor showed no desire to be embroiled in political work.

The raid on O'Connor's house, and the reported remark of Redmond's, naturally brought Jameson under suspicion. It was decided to conceal these suspicions, and keep him under observation. Later evidence shows that Jameson was acting, not under Dublin Castle, but Scotland Yard. He returned to England just after this, apparently to report to his authority. On his return to Dublin, Jameson pressed Tobin and Cullen strongly to put him again in personal touch with Collins. To test their suspicions, Collins decided to set an ingenious trap for him.

Jameson had given Tobin a pass purporting to admit the bearer to military barracks. He was now pressing for its return. Tobin told him Collins was in the country, but he had written to him, and he showed him Collins's reply, in which he told him that the pass was to be found in File No. 31, Box No. 5, on the third shelf at an

address in Iona Drive, where he kept all his papers. The address given was that of an ex-Lord Mayor of Dublin, J. J. Farrell, who during his term of office, had insisted on receiving the King of England, in violation of his pledge given when elected. Mr. Farrell did not obtain his expected knighthood, but it was exceedingly unlikely that the British forces would ever dream of raiding his house in the ordinary course of things.

That same night Mr. Farrell's house was raided, and drastically searched, while its owner was kept shivering on the doorstep in his pyjamas. The public read of the affair with amusement, little suspecting what a serious issue was involved.

After this second failure, Jameson again went to England, but shortly returned and sought to see Tobin. An appointment was made for him in a lonely part of the Ballymun Road, where he was seized and shot dead.

On his death, the fact of his being a British Government Secret agent could no longer be concealed, and the discovery roused indignation in English Socialist circles, where he had passed himself off as a Bolshevik. In Ireland, also, in his conversations he had advocated the lavish use of the gun.

Yet another British spy had meanwhile got in touch with Collins—Fergus Bryan Mulloy, ostensibly an Army Sergeant, stationed in the Pay Office, G.H.Q., Parkgate, who declared himself able and anxious to give Collins much valuable information. Collins met him at O'Connor's house, and, unlike the case of Jameson, distrusted him from the first. He made

great promises, but performed nothing. He proposed that Collins should give him genuine information, and enable him to bring off some capture so as to place him higher in the confidence of his English employers. Collins saw through the man, played him, and had him watched until evidence was accumulated of his treachery. Mulloy was shot dead in Wicklow Street, in broad daylight. He was the last British spy to get into touch with Collins up to the truce.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Settling the Irish Question"

January—March, 1920

WE must turn a while from these exciting events to the political history of the period. In December, 1919, Mr. Lloyd George, English Prime Minister, declared he had a scheme for "settling the Irish question." He announced a new "Home Rule Bill," whose main feature was the setting up of a separate Parliament for six counties of North-East Ulster—a measure which came to be known in Ireland as "The Partition Bill." Mr. Lloyd George quoted Father Michael O'Flanagan, Vice-President of Sinn Fein, who had spoken in favour of a separate government for North-East Ulster. Arthur Griffith, interviewed by a Press representative, declared that there was nothing for Irishmen to discuss in the English Premier's proposals, which were only "made in order to affect and mislead opinion in America." But Mr. Lloyd George had another and subtler purpose—to introduce the wedge of Partition prior to the ultimate settlement with Sinn Fein, which, he foresaw, was inevitable.

Some surprise was caused at this time by the announcement that Lord French had dismissed

Sir Joseph Byrne, Inspector General of the R.I.C., who was a Catholic. It was officially declared that a man "more in accord with the Castle policy" was required. At the same time a reward of £3,000 was offered for any information of persons who fired at or wounded policemen. Lord French might as well have made it three millions; there was no likelihood of having to pay it.

A sinister move, however, was the publishing in England of recruiting posters for the R.I.C.—the first move to create the "Black and Tans."

The Municipal Elections, held in January, 1920, resulted in sweeping victories for Sinn Fein everywhere. Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford elected Sinn Fein majorities on their Municipal Councils, and Sinn Fein Lord Mayors were elected. In Cork Tomas MacCurtain was elected Mayor, in Limerick, Michael O'Callaghan. Both were subsequently to be murdered by English agents. In Dublin Alderman Tom Kelly, then a prisoner in England, was elected Lord Mayor. Waterford, the only constituency in the South of Ireland to reject the Sinn Fein candidate at the General Election, made amends by electing a Sinn Fein Mayor, Dr. White.

All this time Collins's energies were divided between the Intelligence and other work of the Volunteers, and the work of handling the finances of the nation in its struggle with England. Perhaps the best idea of the difficulties and success of the work of the National Loan may be gleaned from his own descriptions in letters to

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De Valera in America. Writing on 15th December, 1919, he says:—

" My Dear Dev.

" The situation has been getting more and more difficult here lately. The arrests at the Dail Offices were a very serious handicap from a routine point of view. I fear there is no one here now who gives you, or any of your assistants, any real news as to how things are developing. For my part, I am doubtless as much to blame as anybody, but I have at least the shadow of a good excuse. I may say, however, that my own particular activity is progressing fairly in the circumstances. The total net amount of money subscribed to the Loan to date is about £30,000, making Applications to the extent of about £35,000. You will understand that this is not very satisfactory, but the hindrances have been simply enormous. Indeed, at the present moment, the main enemy objective is directed to secure the failure of this enterprise. Yet that objective will not be reached, for, although things have been slow, they have been sure, and the promises made throughout the country, and reported to me up to the present, total something in the neighbourhood of £100,000. Advertising is impossible practically, meetings are impossible practically, movements of prominent Sinn Feiners are greatly interfered with, so that everything had to be done quietly, unassumingly, and with much labour. The combination does not appear to appeal to

several people, but the ordinary men and women are certainly showing the faith that is in them.

"I have been to Greystones a couple of times lately. Mrs. De Valera is keeping in really very good spirits. It seems to me that Viv is much improved after his operation.

"With very best wishes to all.

"Yours very sincerely,

"MICHEAL O COILEAIN.

"P.S.—Two notes are enclosed—one from Count Plunkett and one from Cathal."

Again, writing on 10th February, 1920, he says :—

"My dear President,

"We are cheered and heartened by the pleasant and welcome news, which comes to us through you, of the wonderful success of the Loan in the United States.

"May I briefly tell you what we are doing here. But at the outset let me say that even you and my colleagues in the States, let alone those who have not had recent experience of Irish conditions, can scarcely conceive the limits to which the English have carried their repressions and suppressions against this Loan. The enemy Government quickly realised that the economic policy of the Dail was as great a danger to them as its political policy, that in fact the elected Government of Ireland stood for social and economical deliverance,

no less than for political deliverance. Without finance, however, the policy would be inoperative. The enemy must, therefore, at all costs prevent our getting the necessary funds. He attempted, certainly—and with a renewed determination and savagery. His military and armed police smashed up meetings called to support the Loan. They suppressed newspapers, and removed their machinery, if mention were made of the Loan. Prospectuses and literature were seized in the Post Office where discovered. Everywhere all through the country our workers were held up at the point of the bayonet and searched, in some cases three and four times in one day. Official action denied us the use of motor cars, searches and hold-ups denied us the advantages of even horse-vehicles and bicycles. Our people, in distributing leaflets and prospectuses, had to use the by-ways, and not infrequently had to cross country to avoid the enemy forces. Men were put in jail for requesting applications, and men were put in jail for making applications. People found in possession of documents relating to the Loan were put in jail, and the entire male Head Office Staff was put in jail as an 'Illegal Assembly.' The Head Office itself was closed by military force.

"Yet all the attempts have signally failed—the attempts to prevent the people knowing the terms of the Loan and the attempts to prevent them subscribing. We have sent out throughout the length and breadth of Ireland 500,000 copies of the Prospectus, and

2,000,000 leaflets, and a special letter to over 50,000 individuals. All this from the Head Office, while many constituencies got printing of their own done, amounting to as much as 50,000 leaflets and circulars, in some instances.

“ In return the response has been splendid. From the constituency of West Limerick they have sent us up £10,000, and are by no means finished yet. From the neighbouring constituency they assure me they will beat this, and already they have gone close to doing so. From Mid-Cork, remote and mountainous, with no town of any size, they have sent over £5,000, and there, too, the work is still going on. From Leix and Ossory they have registered promises amounting to £9,500, and from Kilkenny they will send us £6,000. In the Castlebar district *alone* they have collected £2,500, and other constituencies in Connacht are doing the same. To illustrate Ulster I will quote two places, each represented by a Unionist—North Fermanagh and East Down. Their figures are £3,000 and £4,000 respectively. They will not be long Unionist.

“ These are not exceptions—they are representative places from each province. Other places that for various reasons did not start so early will be better in the end.

“ These figures indicate a very creditable achievement. They assure final success to our efforts here.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ MICHEAL O COILEAIN.”

It was characteristic of Collins that, as is shown in the last paragraph of the former letter, he found time, amid his multifarious activities, and the stress and danger of his life from day to day, to visit Greystones regularly, and keep De Valera informed of the welfare of his wife and family. It was a risky action, as the house was liable to be watched, and visitors to a small seaside town during winter were likely to attract attention.

At the end of January, 1920, the English authorities again decided to resort to their favourite measure of a "round-up"—this time throughout the country as well as in Dublin. As usual, Collins was informed of this in time to send warnings to Volunteer officers in Dublin, and other well-known Sinn Feiners likely to be arrested. By miscarriage of messages two or three of those to be raided, notably Joe McGrath, received no warning, and were arrested; but the round-up as far as Dublin was concerned, proved a fiasco. The time when Collins learned of the projected raids did not allow of warning being sent to the country, and a number of Volunteers were captured in the provinces. In all 58 arrests were made out of a list running into hundreds.

Robert Barton, who was not being looked for, was accidentally captured by a raiding party and identified. His recapture gave great concern to Collins who, writing to De Valera some days later, remarked—"Since last I wrote you the worst thing that has happened is the arrest of Barton. He is an irreparable loss to us, and, apart from that, I am smarting under a feeling

of great personal sorrow, as we had been in such close association on pretty well all things during the past difficult year."

Barton was courtmartialled and sentenced to penal servitude. Collins determined to make an effort to rescue him, when he was being brought back to Mountjoy Prison, from Ship Street Barracks. Preparations were made to hold up the car containing Barton at the junction of Blessington Street and Berkeley Road, by which route cars bringing prisoners from the Castle always travelled to Mountjoy. On the approach of the expected military car, a handcart with a big ladder, which had been in waiting in Nelson Street, was run across the road so that the car had to pull up, and a party of armed men surrounded the vehicle. The officers and soldiers promptly threw up their hands and surrendered, but the car did not contain Barton, but an English soldier prisoner. By an error of their scouts they had held up the wrong car, and the ingenious and daring plan had miscarried. The British authorities transferred Barton to Portland Prison in England.

Yet another "round-up" in Dublin was determined on by the British authorities, and once again the attempt proved a failure, the "wanted" men being warned in time. Among those on the list was Liam Tobin. By a curious coincidence a young man of the same name, William Tobin, who was not related to him, and had no connection with the Volunteers or any other political movement, lodged at Tobin's house, and this young man was arrested and

kept in custody several weeks before his captors were satisfied that he was not the man they wanted.

An unsuccessful raid for ammunition by Volunteers on the unoccupied premises of the British and Irish Steampacket Company, at Sir John Rogerson's Quay, on February 19th, was followed by important consequences. Two Volunteers were returning home from the raid in the small hours of the morning when a party of police attempted to hold them up. A shooting affray followed in which a police sergeant and a constable were wounded, the latter fatally, and one of the Volunteers, Patrick MacGrath, was badly wounded and captured. MacGrath's wounds were so serious that it was found impossible to bring him to trial, and after a long detention in hospital, he was released permanently disabled. He was a brother of Gabriel MacGrath, mentioned in connection with the Munition Factory and the Squad, who was the other Volunteer concerned in the affray.

This affair ended any disposition on the part of the ordinary Dublin Metropolitan Police to interfere with Volunteers. The practice of arming the uniformed police was discontinued. The affair also caused the British military authorities to decide on imposing "Curfew" on Dublin. An order was issued that all persons, except those provided with permits, should stay within doors from midnight till 5 a.m. This order provoked great indignation and many protests, even among those who had no sympathy with Sinn Féin. The Dublin

Corporation decided that none of their employees should seek permits, and that all the city lights should be turned off at half-past eleven, and remain off until 6 a.m.

Within a week of the imposition of Curfew Collins brought off a fresh coup, which caused great consternation in Dublin Castle. The mail car containing the day's official correspondence for the Castle, a horse drawn vehicle, had only left the Rotunda Rink, G.P.O., at 8.30 a.m., when it was held up by armed men, and all the letters seized. All the cross-channel correspondence for fourteen departments, including those of the Lord Lieutenant, Chief Secretary, Under Secretary, military and R.I.C., were captured. The day was one of wholesale military raids and searches all over Dublin, but no trace of the captured letters could be found by the British authorities. Needless to say, Collins obtained much important information from these letters.

As the Intelligence work grew heavier, Collins found it necessary to increase his staff, and he was greatly hampered by the difficulty of getting suitable men among Dublin Volunteers. Good Intelligence officers are rarely born, they require to be made. Collins also found it necessary to resign the position of Adjutant General. To find a substitute presented some difficulty, but ultimately Gearóid O'Sullivan was appointed. Diarmuid O'Hegarty, now released from prison, had succeeded Collins as Director of Organisation, and Dick McKee, whose sentence terminated at the same time, was now engaged in setting up

and printing "*An tOglách*," in Aungier Street, in the intervals spared from the work of the Dublin Brigade, which grew steadily heavier and more engrossing. Collins owed much to the energetic co-operation of McKee.

It was about this time that the last meeting of the General Executive of the Volunteers, to be held until after the Truce, took place at Cullenswood House, Ranelagh. It was at this meeting that Collins tendered his resignation of the Adjutant-Generalship.

By this time the name of Michael Collins, but little known to the general public twelve months previously, had travelled far and wide. All who were in close touch with the national movement had learned to recognise his importance. The English authorities, if they could not capture him, had at least learned to recognise him as their most formidable opponent. Men who came to Dublin from other parts of Ireland, on business in connection with any department of Dail Eireann or the Army, found that the one man to see was Michael Collins. Although the British authorities, offering large sums of money, could not find him, none of these men had any difficulty in locating him, and no business put before him was neglected. He possessed an extraordinary power of remembering appointments without making a note of them. It was usual at a late hour at night to find the smokers room of Vaughan's Hotel occupied by a number of men from the country, waiting to see Collins by appointment. Collins generally arrived in the room with a bound, glanced rapidly around

him, and called the first man apart, transacted his business with him with lightning speed, dismissed him, called a second man apart, and so on, concentrating his mind on a dozen diverse problems in succession, and making rapid decisions. When all the business was transacted, and not till then, he unbent; among his trusted associates he became the gayest of the gay, indulging in horseplay with the zest of a schoolboy. But all these men, with whom he made so free, and who made free with him, dreaded to face his wrath if they had failed in any job he gave them to do.

A stranger could not but be struck by the mobility of Collins's face, and his quick, impetuous gestures and movements. His face showed a constant change of expression, ranging from the gayest drollery to sudden anger or sternness. He had a curious dogged way of thrusting out his chin when making an assertion which he expected to be challenged, and had a habit of moving his head with quick jerks from one side to the other. All his movements bespoke the overflowing energy of the man. He entered a room like a whirlwind, and once nearly terrified the life out of an English commercial traveller in Vaughan's Hotel by one of these sudden irruptions.

It was in the smokeroom of Vaughan's Hotel that Collins had a rencontre with an English Labour Member of Parliament, about this time, in which the latter gentleman was taught a salutary lesson.

Mr. J. Bromley, M.P., General Secretary of

the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, visited Dublin to attend a meeting of the Irish members of his association, which was held in the smokeroom of Vaughan's Hotel. When the meeting was over, and the majority of the members had dispersed, Mr. Bromley remained in the large room chatting with two or three of the Irish officials of the Union.

Two of us, who had arrived at the hotel for the purpose of seeing Collins, proceeded to the smokeroom. When we entered Mr. Bromley turned to us and said in an aggressive voice—"This is a private room, gentlemen."

Somewhat taken aback, not knowing how the land lay, we retreated downstairs, where we learned, from Christy, that a meeting had been held in the smokeroom, but was now over. At this moment Collins arrived on the scene, and, when he learned what had occurred, he said quietly—"Come upstairs and we'll see this thing through."

We accordingly proceeded upstairs, entered the smokeroom, and seated ourselves in a corner remote from where Mr. Bromley and his friends were. Mr. Bromley at once walked towards us, and declared in the same emphatic and aggressive manner—"This is a private room."

Collins looked at him steadily, and answered very quietly—"I thought it was a public smokeroom."

Mr. Bromley cried in a blustering manner—"I tell you it is private."

Collins answered in the same gentle smiling way, without raising his voice—"If it were

the porter would have told us not to come up."

Mr. Bromley shouted threateningly—"I'll jolly soon see that you're told to clear out," and, walking to the door, called for the proprietor.

Mr. Maguire arrived on the scene, but gave the Labour Leader scant satisfaction. He told him the room had been hired for the purposes of a meeting, but not for the entire night. Thereupon Mr. Bromley, in high dudgeon, declared he would not stay in the room, and departed, leaving his companions behind. Those latter, Irishmen, had evidently no sympathy with their Secretary's curious display of the democratic spirit; they stayed chatting for some time and then departed, bidding us a courteous good-night. Perhaps they had some notion of who we were; but Mr. Bromley is probably unaware to this day of the identity of the persons he sought to eject, or how near he was to being pitched down stairs himself.

An amusing anecdote of this period is told by James M. Sullivan, a United States attorney, who was a lifelong worker in the Irish cause. Mr. Sullivan was at this time domiciled in Dublin, and his house in Palmerston Park was used as a refuge for men "on the run." Knowing that Vaughan's Hotel was a resort of "the boys," he dropped in one night for the purpose of seeing Collins, whom he had never met. He was irritated at being kept waiting, while friends of his were called in one after another to the inner room where Collins was. He decided that "this

man, Collins, has swelled head," and at length encountered a young man, evidently one of Collins's associates, to whom he expressed this view in heated language. The young man heartily agreed, and joined with him in denouncing Collins. He later discovered that it was Michael Collins himself to whom he was speaking.

One night, after midnight, Christy, the porter of Vaughan's Hotel, was startled to find two uniformed policemen knocking at the door. One of them asked for a "glass of water." Collins, who was on the premises, insisted on entertaining them to a drink. They would have been alarmed if they had known who was their host.

Another place used by Collins for the purpose of appointments, with cross-Channel sailors and others, was the publichouse of Phil Shanahan, in Foley Street. Phil Shanahan, a Tipperary man, who had fought in the Insurrection of Easter Week, 1916, and was elected a member of Dail Eireann in 1918, was a very popular character, and Collins entertained a warm regard for him. His house was much used as a rendezvous and place of communication, particularly by the Tipperary Volunteers.

Among the places used by us as "Republican post offices," as clearing houses for letters, documents and (in some cases) arms and equipment, may be mentioned the drapers' shops of Clancy and Hunter, called "The Republican Outfitters" in Talbot Street (which was afterwards wrecked by the Black and Tans), and Brennan and Walsh, 5 Upper O'Connell Street; the dairy shops of Phil Sheeran, 61A

Talbot Street, and the Misses Deegan and O'Neill, 95 Upper Dorset Street; the stationery shops of Máire Ní Raghallaigh, 87 Upper Dorset Street, and the O'Hanrahan's, 384 North Circular Road; the tobacconist's shop of Maurice Collins, 65 Parnell Street; Mrs. Wyse Power's "Irish Farm Produce" shop, 21 Henry Street; the fishmonger's shop of Mr. O'Flanagan in Wexford Street; the flat of Miss Eileen MacGrane, 21 Dawson Street; a private house, 86 South Circular Road, Portobello; and the chemist's shop of Mr. Toomey, 15 Great Denmark Street.

Much use was also made, for messages, meetings and rendezvous, of Barry's Hotel, Great Denmark Street, then owned by Miss O'Dea. The "boots," Phil Weinman, a native of Alsace-Lorraine, was one of our most useful and trusted men. Fleming's Hotel, Gardiner's Place, belonging to Sean O'Mahoney, was also used. Other useful "joints" (as we called them) were the public houses of Sean O'Farrelly ("The Grafton Bar," 141 Stephen's Green), Michael Higgins, 38 Upper Abbey Street; and Jim Kirwan, 49 Parnell Street, of whom more will be said in a later chapter.

Michael Collins was fortunate in having the services of Miss Susan Mason as his secretary and confidential typist. The work of this devoted young lady, carried out loyally and conscientiously amid the greatest difficulties and dangers, was undoubtedly of the utmost value to Collins, who was able to impose complete

confidence in her. Owing to the peculiar circumstances, Miss Mason was not able to carry on her work with the facilities of ordinary office routine, but had to travel about Dublin to various places, transport important documents hither and thither, and meet Collins by appointment at different centres. His ceaseless energy gave her an immense amount of correspondence to deal with daily.

A fresh step towards the break-up of British administration in Ireland was achieved when the courts of justice, established by Dail Eireann, began to function. Parish and District Courts were set up throughout the country, at which local men of standing acted as judges or arbitrators. Litigants resorted to these Dail Courts in preference to British Courts, considering they were more likely to get justice at them. Solicitors attended these Courts, where they got far more practice than in British Courts. The proceedings of Dail Courts were fully reported in the local Press. In fact, British Courts had practically ceased to function at all. Police work was performed by Irish Volunteers, who ultimately found it necessary to form a separate police force.

A Commission of Inquiry into Irish Industries was established by Dail Eireann, with Mr. Darrell Figgis as Secretary. This Commission was composed of men of the highest standing and of various shades of political thought; but even this peaceful and beneficent activity was struck at by the British Government. The Commission was "suppressed," but continued to carry on

its task under difficulties, and did useful work.

It will be seen that the Sinn Fein Movement had been all along a disciplined constructive movement. The country at this period showed no tendency to crime or disorder. The peaceful, nation-building work of Sinn Fein, with the authority of the Irish people behind it, having been attacked by ruthless violence, we were driven to the use of physical force in our own defence, but the attacks on the British forces were all the work of a disciplined body, acting under authority. Baffled in their attempts to smash up Sinn Fein by the ordinary methods of violence hitherto employed, the English Government now embarked on a new campaign, in which all pretence of law, order or morality was flung to the winds.

To carry out this new policy a person of stronger nerves than the choleric and excitable Mr. MacPherson was required. A man of brazen front, free from squeamishness or scruple, was needed to defend the atrocities of the new campaign, and tell the requisite official fables with airy imperturbability, and such a man was found in Sir Hamar Greenwood.

Towards the end of January an R.I.C. man was shot in Thurles, after which the R.I.C. in the barracks ran amok in the town, firing shots, breaking windows and assaulting pedestrians. Commenting on this occurrence, the "London Daily Chronicle," which at that time was regarded as the organ which voiced the English Prime Minister's views, made the following remarks:—

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"Nobody can fail to deplore such occurrences, but equally nobody can wonder at them. Indeed, it is obvious that, if these murderous clubs pursue their course much longer, we may see counter clubs springing up, and the lives of prominent Sinn Feiners becoming as unsafe as prominent officials."

This "intelligent anticipation" proved a remarkably accurate forecast of events. "Reprisals" on a town, after the shooting of a soldier or policeman, became a regular feature of the new campaign, and the "murder clubs" against Sinn Fein appeared in due course.

On March 2nd a British Intelligence Officer, Captain Y.Z., who had just arrived in Dublin, wrote a letter from a Dublin hotel to another officer in the War Office, Whitehall, Captain X., who was shortly to follow him to Ireland. This letter, which was intercepted and reached Collins's hands, began as follows:—

"Have duly reported and found things in a fearful mess, but think will be able to make a good show. Have been given a free hand to carry on, and everyone has been very charming. *Re* our little stunt, I see no prospects until I have got things on a firmer basis, but still hope and believe there are possibilities."

In a later chapter I will show the evidence connecting the writer of this letter with the sending of letters threatening death to prominent

Sinn Feiners in Dublin. For the present I will only ask the reader to note the date of this letter, and the references to a "free hand" and "our little stunt."

On March 16th, Lord Mayor Tomás MacCurtáin, of Cork, received by post a letter bearing a cross, and underneath the words :—

"Thomas MacCurtain prepare for death.
You are doomed."

This letter he regarded as a practical joke. A number of prominent Sinn Feiners, in the South of Ireland, subsequently received similar threatening notices.

On March 20th, at 1 a.m., a party of armed men, with blackened faces, forced an entry into the house of Tomás MacCurtáin, and shot him dead in the presence of his wife. A party of men in mufti, apparently the murderers, were subsequently seen to enter the R.I.C. Barracks in King Street. One of these bore a striking resemblance to Captain X.

This official crime created the most intense horror and indignation throughout Ireland. Questioned on the matter in the British Parliament, Mr. Lloyd George made the dastardly suggestion that Tomás MacCurtáin, one of the most loyal and trusted men in our ranks, had been "murdered by the extremists of his own party." Public opinion in Cork was shown by the coroner's jury, which, after an inquiry lasting sixteen days, returned the following verdict :—

"We find that Alderman Tomás MacCurtáin, Lord Mayor of Cork, died from shock and hemorrhage, caused by bullet wounds, and that he was wilfully wounded under circumstances of the most callous brutality ; and that the murder was organised and carried out by the R.I.C., officially directed by the British Government.

"We return a verdict of wilful murder against David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England ; Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ; Ian MacPherson, late Chief Secretary of Ireland ; Acting-Inspector General Smith, of the R.I.C. ; Divisional Inspector Clayton, of the R.I.C. ; D.I. Swanzy, and some unknown members of the R.I.C."

After the murder of MacCurtáin, District Inspector Swanzy was transferred, for his own safety, to the town of Lisburn, in the North, but he was traced to that place by Collins's Intelligence Officers, and shot dead there by Cork Volunteers. Whether he personally took part in the murder of MacCurtáin or not, it would have been impossible for it to have taken place without his connivance. His immediate removal, after the murder, to the very Orange town of Lisburn, by the English Government, under circumstances of secrecy, was very significant. After he was shot the Orange mob in Lisburn attacked, burned and looted the houses of Catholics by way of a "reprisal."

Writing to Mr. R. J. Cowman, of Clonakilty, on March 31st, Collins said :—

“ Yes, the Lord Mayor’s death was an appalling occurrence, and now the English, in their usual way, are trying to make the world believe that poor Tomás was shot by his own friends. That is the English way always. It ever was. They did it with the Spaniards, and the lies they told about that nation have lasted up to the present day. They did it with the French, and all their recent friendship has not wiped out the effect of their propaganda. They did it against the Boers, and they did it against the Germans in the recent war. They will do it against America, or whatever nation is next fighting them. They will continue until they have no longer the power. The feeling here about the occurrence, and, as far as I can judge, everywhere throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, was the same as it was in Cork, and many a person who was far away from the scene of the tragedy felt the awful deed in his own very presence.”

Not long afterwards the Cork Volunteers succeeded in undermining and blowing up the barracks in King Street (now MacCurtain Street), from which the murderers came. None of the occupants of the barracks was injured. To clear the streets of pedestrians at the time the explosion was expected, a Volunteer fired a shot in the air. The sound of this shot caused all

the police in the barracks to rush to the door just a moment before the place was blown up.

Tomás MacCurtáin was succeeded in the Mayoralty of Cork by Terence MacSwiney, who, in his inaugural speech, used the memorable phrase:—"This contest is one of endurance, and it is not they who can inflict most, but they who can suffer most, who will conquer."

The "murder club" found one of its first centres in Thurles, where the R.I.C. instituted a reign of terror. Civilians were held up, beaten and robbed daily in the town and its vicinity. A few days after the murder of Tomás MacCurtáin, James MacCarthy, of Thurles, was murdered at night in his own house, under similar circumstances, by men wearing policemen's caps and coats, and on the following night Thomas Dwyer was shot dead in his home at the Ragg, near Thurles.

These events synchronised with the announcement of the appointment of Sir Hamar Greenwood as Chief Secretary for Ireland, in place of Mr. MacPherson, and Sir Nevil Macready as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland.

CHAPTER XXII.

Collapse of English Rule

April—May, 1920

THE approach of Easter Sunday, April 4th, 1920, saw the English authorities in Ireland in a strange state of perturbation. The belief had gained strength among them that "Sinn Fein" would celebrate the anniversary of Easter Week by "another little insurrection." It was odd that such an absurd suspicion should have taken root in their minds, when it was obvious that our present methods of guerilla warfare were proving far more effective than the chivalrous gesture of Easter Week, 1916. But once again the inefficiency of their Intelligence Service and the ineffectiveness of their military measures were demonstrated.

In Holy Week military cordons with barricades were placed on all the main roads approaching Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Thurles, and other cities and towns. Passengers by train were searched, and their luggage examined. Troops patrolled the streets, and warships patrolled the coast.

During all this time preparations were being made by the Volunteers all over Ireland for another big blow to the English administration,

and the coup was carried off with complete success, in spite of all these military precautions. On the night before Easter Sunday a number of raids by Volunteers was made on almost all the Income Tax Offices in Dublin, Cork, and every city, town and centre in Ireland; the offices were set on fire, and all documents, books and records relating to income tax were destroyed. Where necessary the residences of Income Tax officials were raided. Even the Belfast Custom House did not escape.

In practically every case the raids were entirely successful, and the collection of Income Tax in Ireland was paralysed, as it was said, "for months to come." As a matter of fact, practically no more income tax was collected in Ireland from that time until the Free State began to function, except what was deducted from official salaries.

On the same night no less than 315 evacuated R.I.C. barracks were destroyed by fire. It was no wonder that the "Freeman's Journal" humorously remarked that the "Irish problem" had become "a burning one."

The question of raiding the Dublin Custom House was considered, but, apart from the fact that there was a military guard on it at the time, it was felt that, to deal effectively with such an undertaking, we would need more men than we could afford to spare. That enterprise, reserved for a later day, was to prove one of the culminating feats of the war against English rule.

The night of the burnings brought an unpleasant experience to Michael Collins. A

group of seven of us were assembled in Vaughan's Hotel, after receiving news of the success of the raids and burnings in Dublin, and were preparing to leave, shortly before midnight, when Christy, the boots, ran in with the news that a large body of soldiers with an armoured car were forming a cordon round the Square outside. Collins, Gearóid O Súilliováin, Diarmuid O'Hegarty and MacGurk darted out into the back garden of the hotel. There was no back door, but they climbed over the wall into the back garden of the next door neighbour, Dr. Eustace, and made their way into the lane through his back door. It was impossible to emerge from the lane without running into the military. By this time it was midnight, the streets were being cleared, and the Curfew patrols added to the danger. The four men climbed over the railing outside Dominick Street Chapel, and spent hours, with their revolvers in their hands, standing in the shadow of the chapel wall. Not until Curfew was over at 5 a.m. were they able to move from their perilous position.

Tobin, Cullen and I left the hotel by the back a few moments later, but fared a little better. Not knowing where the others had gone, we proceeded to work our way down the Square, climbing over walls and roofs; doing some climbing and jumping feats which only the danger of death could teach us. In this way we reached the back garden of an unoccupied dwelling some doors down the Square, which was used in the day time as a cap factory. We

succeeded in breaking into this as noiselessly as any professional burglars. From the upper windows we ascertained that the entire Square was held by military, and we decided there was nothing to do but to pass the night in the empty house. We made a comfortable bed for ourselves from a quantity of matting, and were even able to snatch some sleep. In the morning we proceeded to Vaughan's Hotel for breakfast, to find Collins and his three companions already there, looking decidedly the worse of their night's vigil. It was galling to discover that all this hardship was unnecessary. Although the Square was invested for hours, Vaughan's Hotel was not raided, and we might have safely spent the night there.

The burning of the Income Tax Offices and R.I.C. barracks was only the beginning of a series of events which signalled the complete collapse of English civil administration in Ireland.

At the same time, seventy-five prisoners in Mountjoy went on hunger strike, demanding to be treated as political prisoners. Their protest aroused great popular sympathy, and there were daily demonstrations outside the prison. An appeal to Lord French by Mr. T. J. Clarke, J.P., Chairman of the Visiting Justices of Mountjoy Prison, elicited the reply from the Assistant Under Secretary that the prison rules would not be modified, and that all the prisoners had been "forewarned as to the consequence of perseverance in their conduct, in accordance with the decision of his Majesty's Government." In consequence of this reply, Mr. Clarke resigned

his Commission of the Peace. The National Executive of the Irish Trades' Union Congress and Labour Party ordered a general stoppage of work throughout Ireland as a protest against the treatment of the prisoners. The Standing Committee of the Irish Bishops also issued a statement declaring that, if the hunger strike ended fatally, the responsibility for the deaths would lie on the English Government. Huge meetings of protest were held all over the country.

The hunger strike lasted ten days. Then, on the arrival of General Macready in Dublin, it was decided to release the prisoners. An attempt was made to induce them to give parole, but, as this demand was refused, they were released unconditionally.

This was followed by a hunger strike of prisoners interned in Wormwood Scrubs. These prisoners struck in the first place owing to Joe MacGrath, their leader, being removed from them to another prison. A settlement was arrived at by which some prisoners, selected by Mr. MacGrath, were allowed to accompany him. Shortly afterwards, however, Joseph MacDonagh called a general hunger strike for release, involving nearly 150 prisoners. Irish residents in London gathered outside the prison nightly to make demonstrations of sympathy. The demonstrators were attacked by crowds of roughs. On this occasion the prison authorities subjected the hunger strikers to a severe test of endurance. The hunger strike was allowed to last eighteen days before any of them were released.

The Wormwood Scrubs affair was the first hunger strike for release. Hitherto the hunger strikes, though they usually resulted in the release of the prisoners, had been in enforcement of a demand to be treated as war or political prisoners, and not as criminals, a demand the justice of which was obvious to all. A strike for release was never sanctioned by G.H.Q., and was a mistaken policy. It was a policy that led soon after to the death of Terence MacSwiney and others, and the collapse of the hunger strike as an effective weapon.

The release of the hunger strikers had a fatal sequel at Miltown-Malbay, Co. Clare. All through the country the release was the occasion of popular rejoicings, and in Miltown-Malbay a crowd was gathered round a tar barrel, celebrating the occasion with songs, when a party of military and R.I.C. suddenly appeared on the scene, and opened fire, killing three men and seriously wounding five others. At the ensuing inquest neither police nor military were represented. The jury found a verdict of wilful murder against the R.I.C. and military responsible.

At this time General Headquarters Staff of the Volunteers met weekly, but at different places—at Fionán Lynch's flat, in Pembroke Road; at the house of the Ryans, 19 Ranelagh Road; of Henry O'Connor, 12 Appian Way; at the Keating Branch, 46 Parnell Square; and later at the house of Mrs. O'Rahilly, Herbert Park. At one of these meetings Collins created some alarm by announcing that he was afraid he might not be able to carry on the work of

Director of Intelligence much longer. "I am under a strain which few people realise," he said. We were all painfully conscious of the strain, and often wondered how he kept going, but it was the first and last time I ever heard him admit feeling it. There was general silence. After a few minutes Collins went on—"Perhaps I can manage by delegating more to Tobin." But the strain he was to work under was destined to go on increasing steadily, for practically all the time from this to his death.

At this time Tom Cullen was still using Collins's old office in Bachelor's Walk. One day he left a bag containing papers with a friendly neighbour. The bag was discovered in a raid, with the result that the offices in Bachelor's Walk were also raided. Dublin Castle issued an official report of the raid giving a list of articles found. The list solemnly began:—"Six daggers, as used by assassins." The "daggers" were, of course, knives used for domestic purposes. The papers in Cullen's bag, which were lost, included accounts of the expenditure of money on purchasing arms in England—a fact which caused sore embarrassment to Collins at a later date.

I have referred to the two murders of men in their beds by R.I.C., in Thurles, which followed immediately upon the murder of MacCurtáin in Cork. The R.I.C., in Thurles, most of whom were Ulster Orangemen, instituted a regular reign of terror in the town and neighbourhood. People were bullied and beaten in the streets daily, and even robbed, and at night they introduced the practice of "shooting up" the

town—a lesson quickly learned by the Black and Tans. This practice consisted in firing wildly about the streets so as to create terror. Shots were also fired into the houses of persons known to be Sinn Feiners. They also invented the “reprisal,” which became an established policy of the English Government in Ireland, and ultimately was officially acknowledged. Two co-operative creameries in the neighbourhood were burned down. There can be no doubt that Thurles was one of the first centres of the “murder clubs,” so intelligently anticipated by the “Daily Chronicle,” a home of the “little stunts,” arranged by Captain X., and Captain YZ., of which more anon. It is worthy of note that Captain X, like the Thurles R.I.C., was a member of the Orange Order.

Not many days after the burnings of Holy Saturday night, a fresh coup was again carried out successfully. On the one night thirty more Income Tax Offices were raided, and all official papers destroyed, and 95 more evacuated barracks were burned.

Irish railwaymen now refused to handle munitions of war, and the Executive of the National Union of Railwaymen endorsed this attitude. In many cases engine drivers refused to work trains conveying armed soldiers or war material. The men who refused were suspended one by one, but the strike persisted. Gradually, as the suspensions increased, railway transport became more and more restricted.

There was great military activity on the part of the English in Ireland. Two thousand troops

landed at Bantry, and were distributed through County Cork. Buildings were commandeered for military occupation in many towns. A few incidents which occurred at this time did not tend to increase the prestige of these troops.

A small body of Dublin Volunteers, led by Peadar Clancy, raided the King's Inns, in Henrietta Street, in broad day light, overpowered the guard, and captured 25 rifles, two machine guns, large quantities of ammunition, and other military equipment, which they took away in a lorry, while an admiring crowd looked on.

An English military cyclist patrol of ten men and a sergeant were held up and deprived of their rifles at Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork, by nine Volunteers, of whom only seven were armed, and only with revolvers.

An English official report described how a body of military, returning after making arrests, had been ambushed by a large party of "rebels" near Cahir, Co. Tipperary, and that "in the confusion the prisoners escaped." The true fact is that the troops were fired on by a single Volunteer with a revolver, whereupon they ran away and left their prisoners.

One of the measures taken by the English against Dail Eireann was an attempt to trace and seize its funds by holding an inquiry into accounts held in the different banks. A gentleman named Alan Bell, who had conducted a similar investigation in the Parnellite days, was appointed to carry out a search for the Dail Funds and National Loan. Bank officials were compelled to appear before him in the Castle,

produce their books, and face a searching enquiry into the affairs of their customers. The funds entrusted by the people of Ireland to Dail Eireann were in grave danger of being stolen by the English. While travelling from his home at Monkstown to Dublin, in a crowded tram car one morning, Mr. Bell was taken off the car at Merriion by a party of armed men and shot dead. There were no further inquiries into the affairs of Sinn Fein customers of the Irish banks.

Another political detective, named Dalton, was shot dead in Mountjoy Street. A second one, Sergeant Revell, attacked later, was more lucky. Protected by bullet-proof armour under his coat he was only wounded. From this time the political detectives practically ceased to function on the streets.

On April 25th a party of Volunteers invaded Millstreet, Co. Cork. The R.I.C., believing an attack was contemplated, retired to their barracks. The Volunteers, however, contented themselves with arresting six men, whom they conveyed "to an unknown destination." It transpired that these men were suspected, and proved guilty, of a robbery of bank officials. They confessed, and were ordered to leave the country, and the stolen money, £18,000, was recovered and returned to the owners. This was the beginning of many similar activities on the part of the Volunteers. The disturbed state of the country had encouraged unscrupulous men to crimes of violence, and the Volunteers, having ended the reign of the R.I.C., felt it was their duty to maintain law and order in their districts.

Criminals were arrested, minor offences punished, decrees of Dail Courts enforced, and determined efforts were made to stop the manufacture and sale of "poteen" (illicit whiskey). In fact, after this had gone on for some time, G.H.Q. began to fear that the Volunteers would be absorbed by police work to the neglect of their military duties, and a scheme was worked out by which special Volunteer Police should be attached to each Brigade.

At this time attacks on R.I.C. barracks were a nightly occurrence, and many of them were captured and destroyed. Perhaps the biggest affair of the kind was the siege of Kilmallock Barracks, which the Fenians had unsuccessfully attacked in 1867. On this latter occasion it was burned to the ground—two R.I.C. men were killed and six wounded. Subsequently the R.I.C. set fire to several houses in Kilmallock, burned a public hall to the ground, and fired wildly round the streets. This was an early instance of what came to be known as "reprisals."

Steps were now taken to induce R.I.C. men, with popular sympathies, to resign from the force. The friendly pressure and appeals on the one hand, and the social ostracism on the other hand, began to produce remarkable results. A large number of R.I.C. men, despite their training, had no hostility to their fellow-countrymen, and shrunk from a conflict with them. They had drifted into the force simply as a means of livelihood, and, faced with a clear issue, preferred to stand in with their country to standing in with England. Many members of

the R.I.C. sent in their resignations. The number increased in an ever-swelling flood; each day the papers contained fresh lists of resignations. It may, perhaps, be thought that fear was a motive with some of these men, but such cases were the exception and not the rule. This abandonment of secure and permanent positions involved a heavy sacrifice on the part of the men concerned.

* There were, however, some men working for Collins in the R.I.C., whom it was not thought desirable to allow to resign. A number of these remained on till the end, acting as Intelligence agents for Collins.

At this time also a large number of magistrates in various parts of the country resigned their Commissions, many declaring that they did so as a protest against the English Government's policy in Ireland. These men mostly belonged either to the Unionist "Garrison" class, or were hitherto strong supporters of the English régime, and their defection at this time looked very like rats deserting a sinking ship.

At the Local Government Elections, representatives of Sinn Féin secured a majority on practically every local council, outside North East Ulster. The newly elected Dublin Corporation, and the newly elected Councils, proceeded, at their first meetings, to pledge their allegiance to Dail Eireann, and declined to submit their minutes to the English Local Government Board—a fresh and very serious blow at English civil administration.

The Courts established under Dail Eireann

were now flourishing everywhere, and their decrees were enforced by the Volunteer police. The London "Star," in an editorial dealing with affairs on Ireland, remarked :—

"Sinn Fein appears to be following the Lloyd Georgian line—through terror to triumph. From all accounts Sinn Fein has succeeded brilliantly in demonstrating its ability to administer justice. The increasing supremacy of the Sinn Fein Courts, to which not only Sinn Feiners but Unionists resort, and before which solicitors and barristers are rapidly transferring their practice, leaving the official courts deserted, has the inevitable dash of drollery about it, but its significance is extremely serious, as Mr. Robert Lynd's brilliant despatches to the 'Daily News' show."

The organ of the Irish Unionists, the "Irish Times," declared in a leading article on May 1st :

"The Irish Executive must begin with a full recognition of the dismal truth that hitherto it has been fighting a losing battle. If the confession calls for new methods, then new methods must be found without delay. We have said more than once that the forces of the Crown are being driven back on their headquarters in Dublin by a steadily advancing enemy. . . . Is that statement too strong? . . . A map of seditious successes—since the usually alert intelligence of the Republican

movement has not prepared such a map, perhaps the Executive will forestall it—would show that the King's Government virtually has ceased to exist south of the Boyne and west of the Shannon. If every besieged or destroyed police barracks, and the scene of every other major outrage were marked with a black dot, most of the counties of Munster, Leinster and Connaught would be spotted like a pard. . . .”

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Murder Plot

May, 1920

ON May 14th, and the following three days, a number of members of Dail Eireann and prominent Sinn Feiners in Dublin and adjoining townships received, through the post, typed envelopes bearing the Dublin postmark. These envelopes, when opened, contained a sheet of official Dail Eireann notepaper bearing the words, typed 'in capital letters :—

“AN EYE FOR AN EYE
A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH
THEREFORE A LIFE FOR A LIFE.”

One of these “death notices” was addressed to “Mr. Michael Collins, Mansion House, Dublin.” Collins did not receive this for some time, and, when he was shown similar messages received by others, was wont to remark with a merry laugh : “I’m quite safe. If they get me, I’ll claim I haven’t received my death notice yet.”

He collected a number of these death notices, and satisfied himself that they were typed by the Intelligence Department of Dublin District of the English Army in Ireland.

He even ascertained the typewriter with which they were done. Some of the evidence he obtained on this subject I can now make public ; some of it cannot be revealed for years to come.

The " death notices " were intended to prepare the way for a series of assassinations. As Collins put it :—" Certain leading men and Irish Army Officers were to be murdered, their names being entered on a list ' for definite clearance. ' " (He was quoting from a document in his possession.) The object of typing the " death notices " on Dail Eireann notepaper was to cause mystification as to the authors of the subsequent assassinations, and give colour to the suggestion that the victims were " murdered by their own people. "

When the " Irish Independent " reported the receipt of these " death " notices, typed on Dail Eireann official note paper, it added that a quantity of Dail Eireann notepaper had been seized by police and military during raids on 6 and 76 Harcourt Street, in October and November. Thereupon Lieutenant Colonel W. Edgworth Johnstone, Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, wrote a letter to the " Independent " stating that he was " instructed by his Government " to say that no Dail Eireann notepaper had been taken.

The audacity of this lie will be realised when it is known that for months previously reports by the political branch of the " G " Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police were being *written on Dail Eireann notepaper*—why, it is hard to say, unless it was because it was a better quality of paper than that officially supplied to them.

Here is a typical specimen from many in the possession of Collins :—

“ W. T. Cosgrave, motoring in Kilkenny.

“ I beg to report that the registered owner of motor car R.I. 6480 is Patrick J. Dowling, Belmullet, Co. Mayo. A transfer of the Registration was made on 10th inst., from Crampton, Merrion Row, to Dowling.

“ N. M——.

“ The I.G.

“ Transmitted

“ by order

“ O.B.

“ Supt.

20.11.'19

“ (Above-named visited Kilkenny in motor car R.I. 6480).”

Here we find a report of Inspector M—— to Superintendent Brien, of the D.M.P., initialled by him for transmission to the Inspector General of the R.I.C.—a report on the movements of Mr. William T. Cosgrave, now President of the Irish Free State—and this on Dail Eireann notepaper! This was only one of the many specimens, some initialled by the late Assistant Commissioner Redmond, some of them typed, but most of them written.*

* A number of these documents, together with the letter of Lieutenant A, and the typewritten report by Captain Y.Z., referred to in later paragraphs of this chapter, were stolen by a party of six armed and masked men, who raided my residence on October 17th, 1925. These documents were never recovered, but fortunately copies were in existence, and there was further documentary evidence which escaped the attention of the raiders.

There was, however, further evidence that Dail Eireann notepaper was used by English Intelligence Officers, not only for "death notices," but in their private correspondence. A certain Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant A., wrote from the North Dublin Union on Dail Eireann notepaper to a friend in England, an officer who had resigned or been demobilised. The letter was addressed to "—, Esq., Handsworth, Birmingham," and was returned to the Post Office marked "Not known." The letter was opened in the Post Office. It was dated "N.D.U.," which the English Post Office authorities could not be expected to interpret as "North Dublin Union;" but printed at the head of the letter was "Dail Eireann," followed by the words, in Irish and English—"Correspondence may be addressed to the Secretary, Dail Eireann, c/o Mansion House, Dublin." Accordingly the postal authorities sent the letter in a "returned postal packet" to "Mr. A—, Dail, Eireann, c/o Mansion House, Dublin," and it passed into Collins's hands, to provide a fresh clue against the authors of the threatening notices.

This letter provided other clues, and opened up other sources of information, of which I shall speak presently.

I have already referred to a letter written from a Dublin hotel by a Captain YZ., an Intelligence Officer, just arrived in Dublin, to Captain X., Room No. — War Office, Whitehall, England, which was intercepted by Collins. The full letter ran as follows:—

MICHAEL COLLINS

“ St. Andrew’s Hotel,
“ Exchequer Street,
“ Dublin,
“ 2nd March, 1920.

“ Dear X.

“ Have duly reported and found things in a fearful mess, but think will be able to make a good show. Have been given a free hand to carry on, and everyone has been very charming. *Re* our little stunt, I see no prospects until I have got things on a firmer basis, but still hope and believe there are possibilities. As I intend to put in for my allowance for February, should be awfully grateful if you would kindly tell me the War Office rates for Ration—Servant, Lodging, Fuel, and Light, and shall I send them to you for signature or put them through Irish Command? Hill-Dillon tells me they are trying to get me G.S.O.3. and not F.F., is this correct? and will you please send me the number of my warrant to Ireland, as I have mislaid it, and cannot claim travelling allowance without it. Hoping you are ‘*in the pink*.’ With kindest regards to Colonel Dick and yourself.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ Y.Z.”

Captain X. shortly afterwards followed Captain Y.Z. to Dublin, and Collins was absolutely satisfied that he took part in the murder of Tomás MacCurtáin, Mayor of Cork, on March 20th. Captain X. had a certain strongly marked physical characteristic which caused him to be

easily recognised on the occasion. It may be added that he was an Orangeman, as were also the Thurles police, who carried out the next two murders, a few days later. Under the circumstances the reference to "our little stunt," and being "given a free hand," will be readily understood.

The next clue was a typewritten report by Captain Y.Z. to the Dublin Police, which was intercepted by Collins. It dealt chiefly with the hunger strikers in Mountjoy, and also with other projected movements by "Sinn Fein." Every word of the report was untrue, and it certainly reflected little credit on the efficiency of English military Intelligence. But the principal point of interest about this document was that it was typewritten in the Dublin District Intelligence Office in Dublin Castle.

An examination of this document roused a shrewd suspicion in Collins's mind. He submitted the report and a number of the "death notices" to a typewriting expert. The latter, after a careful scrutiny, expressed himself satisfied that the report and the "death notices" were done with the same machine. He pointed out certain peculiarities, defects and irregularities in the letters, such as every well-used typewriter develops, and declared it would be an amazing coincidence that so many exactly similar ones should occur in the report and the "death notices" if they were not done by the same machine.

It was about this time that I came in touch with a certain person who could, I thought, be

useful to us. I mentioned this matter to Collins at a meeting of G.H.Q. At once he tore out a slip from his note-book, wrote a few lines on it and handed it to me, with the remark—"Ask him these questions." The slip contained four questions, each equally strange, of which I can only remember the first. It was—

"(1) Ask him if he knows a ginger-haired typist."

It sounded like a practical joke, but I could see that Collins was in deadly earnest. I sought out my new acquaintance and, half-hesitatingly, asked the prescribed questions. I was surprised by the effect upon him. He seemed startled by the knowledge I seemed to possess—though I did not myself know the meaning of the questions I was asking. His replies showed me that I had tapped a very important source of information. I reported his replies to Collins, and put him in touch with the person, concealing the identity of Collins, which would probably have frightened him from speaking.

Collins, in framing his questions, had simply been following clues contained in Lieutenant A.'s letter and other intercepted documents. Through this new avenue of information he got farther, and opened out fresh avenues of information which brought him still farther. He learned all the personnel of the English Intelligence Staff, their appearance, hours, habits, and haunts; he learned all about the civilians employed in connection with the military staffs at Dublin

Castle, and the various military posts, and got men in touch with some of them. He made out a list of all serving officers living outside barracks. He traced a number of Secret Service men, living as civilians in Dublin. He was later able to trace some of the authors of the murders to be described in subsequent chapters.

An interesting document drafted by Colonel S., General Staff, Fifth Division, outlining the duties of the various services in the Command, in dealing with Sinn Fein, was captured by Collins about this time. The instructions are prefaced by a report on "the state of the country," commencing:—

"Throughout the Brigade Area, the greater part of the population, either voluntarily or through intimidation, sympathises with the demand for an Irish Republic, and supports the Irish Republican Volunteers.

"All the public services, such as the County Councils, Posts and Telegraphs, and Railways, are in sympathy with the Republican Party.

"Hitherto the policy of the Republican Party has been to prove that it is the only Governing Body in Ireland, and with this object in view have (*sic*) devoted themselves principally to:—

"(a) Attacks on the Civil administration, by means of assassinations of R.I.C., destruction of public buildings, boycotting of Courts of Justice, and intimidation of witnesses.

“ (b) Setting up Republican Courts of Justice, and forcing the population to plead before them.

“ Such attacks as have been made on the military have been directed towards the capture of arms and ammunition, rather than the killing of men.

“ The Republican leaders may at any time, decide to utilise their forces in an attempt to gain military successes by organising a general Rising. The stoppage of the railways would probably lead to greater activity on the part of the Irish Volunteers, who would become much stronger owing to the ‘out of works’ permanently joining the Volunteers.

“ FORM OF ISSUE OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

“ These instructions are, therefore, issued in two parts :—

“ (A) The existing distribution and action of troops to deal with local disturbances, directed principally against the civil administration, by the I.R.V., assisted by disaffected inhabitants.

“ (B) The re-distribution and subsequent action of the troops, which would be necessitated by a General Rising, or even by a general stoppage of Railways.”

The most interesting point in the long detailed instructions in this document is the section dealing with Intelligence Officers. They are instructed how to mix with the civilian population in mufti, and "to have some obvious business such as fishing or shooting, or visiting friends, or some other excuse" It is explained that "it is useless to depend entirely on the R.I.C. for information." Among a list of "headings" of matters to be dealt with we find:—

"*Black List*.—Additions and corrections to residences on the Black List. They may be classified under 2, 3, or 4 above. Who are the really dangerous men?"

In view of what I have revealed, and subsequent developments, there cannot be much doubt as to the meaning of this "Black List."

Sir Hamar Greenwood had now arrived in Ireland, and Mr. Cope, C.B. (now Sir Arthur), succeeded Sir John Taylor as Assistant Under-Secretary for Ireland. The English papers contained talk of new military measures against "the rebels," of "blockhouse systems," and "flying columns." The "system" devised by the English Government to deal with the Irish claim for independence, however, was not a "blockhouse system," but simply espionage, murder, and the terrorising of the general population.

A letter written by General ---, one of the newly appointed Divisional Commissioners of the

R.I.C., on June 1st, was captured by Collins. It contained the following passage :—

“ I have been told the new policy and plan, and I am satisfied, though I doubt its ultimate success in the main particular—*the stamping out of terrorism by secret murder.*”

END OF VOLUME I.

